Daily Report

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Further Reportage on SELA Meeting in Caracas

ODCA Leader Condemns Noriega

PA270014 Hamburg DPA in Spanish 2345 GMT 26 Mar 88

[Text] Caracas, 26 Mar (DPA)—Senator Hilarion Cardozo, secretary general of the Christian Democratic Organization of America (ODCA), today in Caracas urged SELA to condemn the regime imposed by General Manuel Antonio Noriega in Panama.

Cardozo said that although SELA and ODCA reject U.S. interference on the isthmus and support respect for the Panama Canal Treaties, "we cannot view the problem as a confrontation between Panama and the United States, but rather as a struggle between Noriega and the Panamanian people, who do not want him to participate in their government."

"Noriega and the United States have been accomplices; therefore, SELA cannot fall into the trap of supporting Noriega in power. It should, instead, condemn the violation of human rights, freedom of expression, and the people's will," he added.

The ODCA leader added that "SELA should condemn the repression and join in the Panamanian people's struggle for sovereignty."

Panama Requests Aid, Solidarity

PA281927 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1653 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] At this very moment, a SELA extraordinary meeting is taking place in Caracas, Venezuela. A cable datelined Caracas reports that Panama will request Latin America's solidarity and concrete aid in view of the situation brought about by U.S.-imposed economic sanctions. This statement was made by Ambassador to Caracas Marcel Salamin, moments before the SELA extraordinary meeting to discuss this topic was about to begin.

The ambassador told the press Panama hopes once SELA expresses its position, the United States will reconsider the situation.

Panama will ask SELA member countries for financial aid and new markets for their exports, which are being blockaded by the United States. This assistance will enable Panama to meet its essential needs, such as food, technology, and medicines, Salamin added.

On the possible [eventual] departure of Panama's strongman, General Manuel Antonio Noriega, which the United States is trying to bring about through economic sanctions, Ambassador to Venezuela Marcel Salamin said that this depends on a national dialogue and not on unacceptable U.S. pressure.

Panamanian Foreign Minister Jorge Abadia said last night, upon his arrival in Caracas to attend the meeting, that Gen Noriega is holding firm in his stance because this reflects the nationalist position many Panamanians feel. It is not a change in command that is being sought in Panama. It is a change of a nationalist position to that of yielding, and the Panamanian people are not willing to yield, Abadia stressed. Abadia stressed that the Panamanian people are stoically and nationalistically bearing the aggression by a foreign power which they are suffering. We are not going to accept aggression meekly. We are not going to accept foreign powers—regardless of who they are—telling us what are destiny is and how we are to reach it, Abadia added.

More than 50 delegates of the 26 member countries are attending the SELA meeting, including 7 ministers and 3 deputy ministers. Panama is represented by Ricaurte Vasquez, minister of planning and economic policy, in addition to Foreign Minister Jorge Abadia Arias.

Abadia Addresses Meeting

PA282126 Paris AFP in Spanish 1855 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Caracas, 28 Mar (AFP)—The Panamanian Government today reiterated its willingness to start a democratic process through a "social pact." "We reiterate our obligation to strengthen the Panamanian democratic system," said the statement read by Panamanian Foreign Minister Jorge Abadia Arias before 24 representatives of the 26 SELA member states.

The 6th SELA Extraordinary Council is meeting in Caracas today to discuss the U.S. economic measures against Panama. SELA may issue a joint regional reply to these measures.

"The Panamanian Government guarantees to its people and the region's governments and peoples its unrestricted respect for constitutional principles, civic liberties, and citizens' rights and obligations, especially those regarding the popular and direct election of government officials," Abadia said.

"Likewise, all constitutional procedures will be rigorously complied with in making civilian and military assignments, while respecting the corresponding legislation, terms of office, and the existing assignments," he added.

Abadia recalled the 1 March promise by President [as received] Manuel Solis Palma to restructure the electoral tribunal "with the participation of opposition political party representatives." Abadia also recalled General Manuel Antonio Noriega's offer to resign.

"The government (...) gives Gen Noriega's decision great importance, as it unequivocably states the subordination of the Armed Forces to civilian constitutional power," Abadia stressed.

The Panamanian Government also interpreted this decision as "a firm demonstration that the Armed Force will contribute to the start of a political dialogue. For t dialogue to take place, the Panamanian opposition mus put aside violence and not request foreign intervention to solve our problems, which should only be dealt with peacefully, between Panamanians, and in accordance with our laws."

"On the occasion of this extraordinary SELA Council meeting, we solemnly reiterate the Panamanian Government's willingness to start this dialogue and to have an authentic democratic platform based on a social pact that preserves the gains of all social and popular groups," Abadia concluded.

Peruvian, Other Ministers To Discuss Project

PY251414 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0233 GMT 25 Mar 88

[Text] Lima, 24 Mar (EFE)—The Peruvian Foreign Ministry today reported that the foreign minister of Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru will meet on 20 June in Arequipa to discuss the construction of a railroad that will connect the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

The meeting was originally to have taken place in the port of Matarini, 70 km from Arequipa and 1,050 km south of Lima. This port will be the Pacific terminal of the railroad, which will cross three countries.

Eduardo Ponce Vivanco, Peruvian joint under secretary for bilateral policy for the Americas, said that his country is supposed to make an $8 million investment in this project and has the financial support to carry it out.

Foreign Ministers Dante Caputo of Argentina, Guillermo Bedregal of Bolivia, and Allan Wagner of Peru will meet in Arequipa to reach an agreement regarding this railway integration project.

Cuba

Bofill Version of Biography, Personality Scorned

PA251452 Havana International Service in Spanish 0000 GMT 24 Mar 88

[Report by Barbara Betancourt]

[Text] Today we will talk about some aspects of the personality that Ricardo Bofill Pages, the head of a small group of stateless counterrevolutionaries, has created for himself. His group is composed of people who, at the direction of the U.S. Government, are carrying out a campaign slandering Cuba's respect for human rights.

Bofill has gone so far as to say that he decidedly fought the Batista dictatorship. However, Eduardo Vignier, a neighbor of his from the city of Madruga, where both lived at that time, has denied that.

[Begin Vignier recording] On 1 January 1959 I was home when the radio began broadcasting reports that Batista had fled. I remember that I was listening to Radio COCO. Very early that morning Bofill went to my home with some signs he had painted. He suggested I put on one of those signs and that we both take to the street wearing them. I said no. I told him that I would not go out on the street wearing that sign because I did not belong to the organization that the sign stood for and I was not involved in any kind of activity or anything like that. [end recording]

That day, 1 January 1959, Ricardo Bofill was severely beaten on a Madruga street corner by a man called Georgino Velasquez, who had been in prison because of his revolutionary activities during the Batista dictatorship.

Why did Georgino punch Bofill?

[Begin Velasquez recording] I participated in the 9 April 1958 strike. A few days after the strike, this young man—he was a young man then—was thrown out of barracks by a sergeant. Bofill was heard telling the sergeant: How can you throw me out? Don't you realize that the captain put me in charge of keeping him informed about all problems involving revolutionaries in town? I fixed him in my mind. I told myself: I will never forget this guy. [end recording]

You have heard it. The anti-Batista-fighter image that Bofill created for himself is nothing but another of his stories.

Ricardo Bofill also presents himself as a former University of Havana professor with a doctor's degree in Marxist philosophy and whose curriculum vitae includes courses in higher education centers of the highest repute in Paris, Moscow, Prague, Brussels, etc.

However, several persons affirm that his doctorate claim is another story. His aunt, Isabel Pages, is one of those persons.

[Begin Pages recording] He was never a professor, never, never. Never in his life. He worked at the Fernanda Can Factory. [end recording]

If you still have any doubt, friends, let's hear what Isaura Suarez, an official from the University of Havana administration, has to say.

[Begin Suarez recording] Regarding Bofill's statement to the media about his expulsion from the University of Havana, we can affirm that this never happened because he was never a professor at the University of Havana. There is no such resolution because he was never a professor and therefore he could never be dismissed from the institution. [end recording]

The alleged dissident has also charged that he has never been offered a job in Cuba. Apparently he has, on top of other defects, a bad memory. He is still remembered at the Luis Melian factory here in the city of Havana.

[Begin recording of unidentified male speaker] Some years ago Bofill worked in this factory. He was assigned to the lids department and worked there for 2 years. From there he went to take a training course. He continued receiving a salary. It was never taken away from him. He continued earning more than 300 pesos a month. [end recording]

Later he was offered a job as translator at the Cuban Book Institute. Pablo Pacheco, the president of that institution, will tell us about what Bofill did there.

[Begin Pacheco recording] We gave him a book to translate. I selected the book myself. It was not a difficult book to translate. The title of the book was [title indistinct], by a U.S. expert, Leonard Chassky. We gave him that book, which uses clear sentences and has no idiomatic complexities. Bofill spent several weeks, I would say months, with the book. Finally he came here, to the Segundo Cabo Palace. He did not even walk in, according to what my colleagues here have told me. He called the chief of the translations department to the door and gave her the book, saying that he did not find himself suitable to translate the work, since he could hardly read English, and that while he would be prepared to translate a document for his personal use, he could not do this type of translation, which in this case involved an elementary translation requiring a certain command of the English language to translate it into Spanish. [end recording]

There is one really funny Bofill story: Ricardo Bofill claims he was born in Spain.

[Begin recording of Madruga official] As Madruga Civil Registry official, I have certified that on page 281 of book 35 there is a record of the birth of citizen Ricardo Bofill Pages.

Bofill Pages was born on 22 June 1943 at 1800. He is the son of Ricardo Bofill Hernandez and of Pastora Pages Munoz, who are from [words indistinct]. [end recording]

Officials Answer Questions on Penal Reform

FL261345 Havana Television Cubana Network in Spanish 0200 GMT 19 Mar 88

[Special panel program to answer the public's questions on penal code reform, with the participation of Cuban officials Severo Aguirre del Cristo, vice president of the National Assembly of the People's Government, ANPP; Juan Escalona Reguera, minister of justice; Division General Pascual Martinez Gil, first vice minister of the interior—all members of the PCC Central Committee; Raul Amaro Salup, president of the Supreme People's Tribunal; Aroldo Lores Roque, of the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic; and unidentified moderators, in studio; PCC Politburo member Vilma Espin also participates via video recording; date not given—live or recorded]

[Text] [Moderator] We will begin with questions from the public. We would like to address Justice Minister Escalona for the first one. From now on, what instruments will regulate those crimes that were left out of the penal code? How will fines be determined for a misdemeanor?

[Escalona] Well, as we announced at the ANPP, the Council of State approved Decree-Law 99 on 25 December. It replaces Decree-Law 80 in effect in our country, and lays the foundations for the misdemeanor system. It refers mainly to infringements of a personal nature, to individual behavior. But, I repeat, this is only the foundation to the system. At this time, the first of the decrees that will make up the system is presently circulating in the Council of Ministers. This is the decree that regulates the levying of fines for misdemeanors committed in those areas falling under the jurisdiction of the Interior Ministry. In other words, this decree will cover infringements on public order, fire prevention and physical protection measures, and identification card legislation.

It also covers a large number of cases taken out from the penal code that are now going to come under the term misdemeanor. I am referring, for example, to negligence in the work projects [maltrato de obra], to death threats that do not really entail a risk. Of course, death threats remain under the penal code when there truly are reasons to believe that they will be carried out. The Interior Ministry decree regulating this type of behavior also includes driving without a license, for example, which our code had so far been considering a crime.

The fine for these misdemeanors will depend on the danger the action entails. There will be minimal fines—for educational purposes more than anything else. These might involve problems in upkeep, obstruction of public passage; in short, areas that do not imply any danger.

However, in removing certain types of behavior from the code, there are some that do entail a certain amount of danger—for example, infractions with regard to the fire prevention measures. There is a latent danger that a fire might occur such as the ones we have had in Havana. I am referring to the ones at the Habana Libre Hotel and the State Committee for Economic Cooperation. Violations of existing measures resulted in fires that caused serious losses to the country's economy.

Each decree handed down will state the amount of the fine.

There may be misdemeanors for which the fine will be 5 pesos. The Interior Ministry decree fixes the fines. Others may come to 60, 70. Our intention was to establish the degrees of danger. On that basis six or seven types of fines of varying amounts will be set. However, this will be stated in each one of the decrees.

Of course, once imposed, Decree-Law 99 allows 30 days for the payment of these fines. Otherwise, the fines will be doubled. After 60 days, legal proceedings for the collection of these fines will begin. Salaries may be withheld, etc—whatever measures are necessary to collect the fines. We are convinced that this procedure will be efficient and educational to the extent that we, too, are effective in the collection of these fines.

[Moderator] We would like to address the second question to Dr Amaro Salup. What will happen in cases involving theft of objects with limited material value?

[Amaro Salup] One of the most important modifications of the penal code is the one concerning the crime of theft. According to studies carried out, one of the most repeated statistics concerned the theft of objects of little or very limited value. By this we mean those that do not exceed 100 pesos. Sanctions go as high as 9 months' imprisonment. Among the reforms introduced to the penal code there is the legal possibility of incurring a fine three times the value of the object or objects stolen, in addition to having to return these items or the money stolen, if that is the case. This will be applied by means of the instruments available to the police in the case of first-time offenders. In the case of first-time offenders, it will take the form of administrative collection of the fine. If this same person commits the same kind of crime involving similar amounts a second time, he will have to submit to the dispositions of the penal code; in other words, the full penal legislation, which might entail a prison sentence of up to 1 year.

We feel that this way we will be able to avoid a large number of penal proceedings involving thefts that were very small but, because of existing legislation, had to be sanctioned, often with fines and sometimes with prison sentences. We feel that this will help to alert, to educate—or rather to reeducate—in order to prevent further infractions. We believe that this type of theft will be reduced this way.

[Moderator] We would like to address this question to Dr Escalona. What measures will be taken with regard to those citizens who do not pay their fines? What financial mechanisms will be used to implement the collection of the fines?

[Escalona] As we said earlier, if the fine is not paid in 60 days, collection proceedings will begin. We would withhold the paycheck or put a lien on the property. If the individual does not have a fixed wage coming in or a bank account, or if it is not possible to put a lien on his property, the code establishes a new crime. This is nonpayment of fines. It will apply to citizens who refuse to pay their fines. The authority imposing the fine will be responsible for prosecuting so as to avoid court appearances of citizens who really do not have the material resources, because of their personal income, etc, as, for instance, some elderly people whose only income is social security.

The new crime refers to those people who try to escape paying the fine because they live outside the standards and rules of our society.

How are we going to collect these fines? The fines imposed because of this misdemeanor system and also those imposed, as Dr Amaro Salup explained, in cases of thefts involving small amounts, will be collected by collection offices to be created by the State Committee for Finance in all our country's municipalities. We are going to set up these offices so they can handle the collection of these fines without having to create big, bureaucratic agencies. These offices will handle the collection of fines. They will perform this function by doing the collecting outside of work hours, on nonworking days, so that they can collect as soon as the fine is imposed. This should remind the fined citizen that he has 30 days to pay, that after 30 days the fine is doubled, and that after all this, the office itself will start legal collection proceedings, liens, etc, or send him to the corresponding court for trial.

[Moderator] Dr Aroldo [Lores Roque], we would like you to talk to us about another concern of the public: the new items incorporated into the code. The question reads: One of the items incorporated into the code is the one referring to illegal enrichment. What circumstances led to the sanctioning of this crime? How does the code deal with it?

[Lores] In order to answer this question, we should begin by reiterating once more that ours is a society of workers, one in which individuals augment personal property only through licit sources of income.

We consider the following as licit sources of income: wages, retirement pensions, inheritances when a relative dies, and many other sources legally established to augment the patrimony or income level of a citizen.

Many cases have been discovered in which a citizen, a functionary, an official, a state employee, has significantly increased his personal property and this does not accord with his real income. Illegal enrichment would play a major role in these cases. The state employee, functionary, official who cannot explain the sources of income through which his patrimony has grown significantly or his excessive expenditures for a certain period of time would come under this crime. He would be penalized with the principal sanction established by the penal code as well as with the accessory sanction of confiscation of property.

[Moderator] Pardon me, you said that there had been many cases.

[Lores] Not really. Some cases have been found in which the increase in patrimony has been significant. But there have not, in fact, been that many cases.

[Moderator] [Words indistinct] What role can we play as a people when we see cases in which citizens grow wealthy as a result of illegal activities? Gen Pascual [Martinez Gil], could you answer this one?

[Martinez] Well, we should start by saying we believe one must proceed with the utmost objectivity as regards activities of this nature. There could be people who appear to have a higher standard of living and yet are not engaged in illegal activities. When there is evidence that a citizen is engaged in illegal activities and growing rich, we feel that the person who knows of these activities should inform the authorities and submit the evidence so that the situation can be investigated.

[Moderator] We would like to address our next question to Dr Severo Aguirre del Cristo. The question reads as follows: What role did the ANPP play in the penal code reform?

[Aguirre del Cristo] The ANPP took part intensively, participated fully. A committee of deputies who were lawyers, with the cooperation of other lawyers who were not deputies but had a great deal of experience, drafted the documents that served as the foundation of the work to make the necessary modification to the existing penal code. This code is still in force but will cease on 30 April. Deputies from all over the country participated in the study of the modifications bill in one way or another. They worked not only by using their personal knowledge

and experience; they also took the public's views—views about the need for these changes—very much into account. All this culminated in the most recent period of sessions of the ANPP.

[Moderator] We have another question here about the procedure to release someone from prison. This time we would like to give this question to Gen Pascual. Who are the inmates who have benefited from the procedure of excarceration?

[Martinez] Well, we would like to say first of all that, on the basis of the behavior of prisoners, penal code provisions, and penal regulations, the tribunals, the prosecutors offices, the penitentiary establishments, and the excarceration committees have proposed to the courts that they grant conditional release or leave of absence from the prisons to those inmates whose conduct, (?magnitude) of crime, and lack of danger to society merit this conditional release or leave of absence for the abovementioned reasons or for humanitarian reasons.

From the end of 1985, when Decree-Law 87 was issued, the people's tribunals were empowered to review the cases of those prisoners who had received sentences that might be viewed as too severe. They were also empowered to hand down a more fitting sentence for a certain category of crimes. This process or this faculty granted to the people's tribunals made it possible to propose conditional release or leave for a considerable number of prisoners who posed no social danger and behaved in an adequate fashion, and who had also enrolled in the prison's reeducation programs. They also participated actively in socially useful work, of course.

[Begin recording] [Moderator] We interviewed Comrade Vilma Espin especially for this program. She is member of the PCC Politburo and president of the National Social Prevention and Attention Commission. Comrade Vilma, what specific measures will be taken to guarantee that people leaving prison will be well received by society?

[Video shows Espin speaking] We should say that, in general, there is a generosity in this socialist society that has given everybody the possibilities to receive training, to be useful, to have a better life. I would say that generosity and [words indistinct]. Of course, not everybody has the same level of awareness and we should work through our mass organizations, our state organs, schools, work centers, to make it possible to create the awareness in everyone that we are all responsible for ensuring that all citizens have an opportunity. Mistakes have been made sometimes that are not so serious, crimes have been committed that are not so serious. This policy of de-penalization responds to the desire to save those who have committed these mistakes and crimes. These are slight offenses; in other words, these people are not yet criminals.

Our objective is to save the largest number of our citizens so that they can be useful to society. Naturally, we are speaking especially of those who are the youngest, who have the best chances to be saved. We have therefore been working for a long time through the mass organizations, the social organizations, the state organs that make up the prevention commission, to, first of all, achieve this de-penalization. We witnessed cases of young people who were jailed for minor offenses; they stole some glasses, a shirt, and they were sentenced to years in prison. This was not correct. We felt that we first had to work with young people, and even adults, when they committed a crime for the first time.

Sometimes they don't fully realize the gravity of these crimes. Therefore, we have to educate them some more, or reeducate them when they have had a bad education. We must realize that many of the young people committing crimes 30 years after the beginning of our revolution are the product of this society. In a way, we will have failed if we don't make these young people useful to society. Therefore, we believe that everybody should work toward this goal. Each revolutionary must be aware of his responsibility in this society to try to save these individuals who have committed a crime for the first time.

Of course, when we are dealing with hardened criminals, we have to resort to other measures. In many cases, these measures mean prison. We also have to work with them in prison, in the centers for the reeducation of minors, in the correctional schools. We can also do preventive work so that these young people can be saved in time. We feel that we have to work in each one of the neighborhoods, through the Federation of Cuban Women, the PCC, the mass organizations in general, and the social organizations, so that the people coming to the neighborhood will not be rejected. The same thing goes for the work centers. We must try to help them. We know of many cases in which people who committed crimes before the revolution fought splendidly for the revolution, and today are excellent revolutionaries, role models for the people. In other words, the fact that they committed an error or a crime once does not mean that they cannot change their lives.

It would entail a failure for our revolution if a comrade who committed a crime for the first time in his life could not be helped to change his ways, made to realize his mistake, and convinced that he could be useful to society. [end recording]

[Moderator] We have another question about the benefits of the penal code reform. The reform grants more power to municipal courts. What specific benefits will this bring to the population? Dr Amaro, could you answer this one?

[Amaro Salup] With approval of the penal code reforms, whereby criminal acts are transferred to the municipal tribunals and at the same time the sanctioning levels of

these tribunals are increased—and we think that in the future the jurisdiction of the municipal tribunals could expand as their sanctioning powers expand—the provincial tribunals, police courts, and prosecutor's office will be relieved from processing cases of this type now under provincial tribunal jurisdiction. They will pass instead to the municipal courts, with a process [words indistinct] much simpler, the hearing and resolution of the case. I think that this will help benefit the citizenry in general, not to mention the persons accused or on trial, the victims, the witnesses. The cases in which they are involved will be heard and resolved with less tiresome proceedings and in a simpler and more efficient manner.

[Moderator] Dr Amaro Salup, would this then imply more efficient justice?

[Amaro Salup] We think so. I think—and I am now going to speak as an individual—that the more justice is handed down in an increasingly efficient, prompt, timely manner, the more effective it is. In other words, as I had already said, the great time lag between the occurrence of a crime and the corresponding trial makes this lose a lot of its value, not to mention how the interests of those wronged, the accused themselves, the persons under trial themselves, are affected. They see that the matter is taking time and there is no resolution. This can have an affect from a moral and physical point of view, etc. I think it has this virtue—it will bring greater efficiency to the work of the tribunals and, as I said before, not only to the tribunals. Let's not egoistically speak only from the point of view of the tribunals. I think that the prosecutor's office will also do i's job more efficiently because it will be able to dedicate its fundamental efforts to the more complex, important cases. This also affects the police; specifically, within the National Revolutionary Police [PNR], it affects police proceedings. With the number of cases—as we call them, and the law calls them—the preliminary files, they have, they are confronted with a big workload. They have to divide their attention between very important cases and cases of small importance. I think that the procedures and handling now allowed by the penal code reform will facilitate the work of all of us, of the whole judicial system.

[Moderator] Dr Escalona, someone phoned in with a concern. The question is: What advantages will the code reform bring to those citizens who do not commit crimes?

[Escalona] Well, the question is a bit surprising. Penal codes are written for those who commit crimes, not for those who don't. However, it must still be said that in the whole process of drafting the modifications of the code, we have been thinking, first of all, of the guarantees for our people. Evidently, by suppressing a whole series of offenses entailing little danger and, in addition, by concentrating the efforts of all the country's judicial and police organs on the investigation of actions that are really dangerous and hence real crimes, we will help the PNR, as well as the prosecutor's office and our tribunals, to concentrate their efforts on the aspects of investigation, search, capture, and punishment of the real criminals that might exist in our society. This will also allow them not to waste time, efforts, resources, in the investigation of cases that are not actually so.

I also think that it is a good question because it gives us a chance to repeat to the public that we must learn to adopt measures of self-defense. I am referring to taking basic precautionary measures to make more difficult the theft of an object or an article—a piece of clothing left unattended, a door left open, an unlocked car. In other words, I am talking about our negligence or idealism which makes us think that we live in a perfect society. We have not attained this perfect society, not yet. The people must do their share in the effort to make it difficult for these actions to occur. I think the basic thing about the penal code for people who do not commit crimes is the guarantee that it will begin to establish to the effect that we are going to aim our efforts in the main direction, and ancillary things will be resolved through the misdemeanor system.

[Moderator] The next question from our people is as follows: What do the sanctions of correctional work with internment and correctional work without internment mean? We would like to have Dr Amaro Salup answer the question this time.

[Amaro Salup] In both cases, we are acting on the premise that the act is not serious, that the conduct or personal circumstances of the guilty party are not unfavorable or, as we normally say, that they are positive. We must also keep in mind that in some cases there are certain traits of behavior that do not make it advisable for a person to be immediately reintegrated into society. The person must spend some time in a more restricted regimen than the one of correctional work without internment. In other words, we could say that the individual circumstances and characteristics of the person will essentially determine whether he goes to a regimen with internment or without internment. However, the very fact that the sanction imposed does not exceed 3 years makes it clear that we are not talking about an act that poses a serious danger for society. A danger, yes, but a limited danger. Through these mechanisms, through work, we seek the rehabilitation of the person under these conditions.

[Moderator] Doctor, with the purpose of shedding more light on this matter, could you give us an example of when correctional work with or without internment would be used?

[Amaro Salup] Yes. As I had previously said, in all cases where the imposed sanction is up to 3 years of deprivation of liberty, it can be substituted by correctional work with or without internment. To make this very clear: No sanction that exceeds 3 years can receive this type of treatment. It must necessarily be a maximum of 3 years

of deprivation of liberty so that the tribunal can substitute the sentence at the same time that it is read. In other words, it is not substituted at a later time, but rather at the same time the sentence is read. In this sense, this type of measure may apply to all crimes—for example, those under the jurisdiction of the municipal tribunal—which might imply the possibility of deprivation of liberty, as long as municipal sanctions do not exceed, in any case, 1 year of deprivation of liberty. Here we take into account the crime itself, the way it was executed, the danger it posed, and the personal circumstances of the person who committed the crime. As for the crimes of greater magnitude—in other words, those which exceed more than 1 year of deprivation of liberty, which are then under the jurisdiction of the provincial tribunals—correctional work can apply to any type of crime in which the sentence is up to 3 years—let's say theft involving a reduced amount, not 100 pesos, as we discussed before, but exceeding this amount, with a sentence not exceeding 3 years—if the person is a first-time offender.

Another example that comes to mind at the moment, and that is worth mentioning, is the case of noncompliance with obligations derived from application of the misdemeanor system. In other words, a person who committed a misdemeanor and did not pay the fine could be subjected to correctional work. We could say correctional work with internment, and maybe in certain cases without internment. However, it would be treatment of this type, since it would be of little value to impose a fine on someone who had not paid a fine in the first place. In short, it can be applied to all crimes, injuries, which even if serious are not of great concern, and which are the product of a circumstantial act and not the act of some tough guy or bully, as we call them, acts which entail a slight sentence, let's say a year, and which we feel deserve a measure of this type because it's a first-time offense or because of the characteristics of the person's family environment—even his conduct at work, or social behavior in the past.

To summarize, the sentence for any crime in the penal code which is sanctioned with deprivation of liberty of up to 3 years can be substituted with deprivation of liberty with correctional work under either one of these two forms. However, I insist that for the imposition of this measure, there are two elements that I think are basic: the level of danger shown in the execution of the crime, and the personal circumstances of the author of the crime. I think that this last element is indispensable in the consideration of the application of this type of measure.

[Moderator] Well, we have another question phoned in by the public. The questions reads as follows: I would like to have clarified what kind of protection the people will have against acts such as assaults, etc where no serious injury is caused. We would like Gen Martinez Gil to answer this question.

[Martinez] We would like to begin answering this question by emphasizing that there really isn't a great element of danger among our people, in our country, in our society. Our people enjoy tranquillity, safety. This does not mean that some individuals at a particular time will not commit a criminal act directed against the people, for example, theft involving violence, or assaults as they are referred to in the question asked by our people. We consider that there can actually be activities, criminal acts against people, basically out on the streets, which may or may not lead to serious injury. However, we think that our people have protection; we have police surveillance, prevention and social attention committees, and mass organizations, and our people themselves are people who keep watch over the tranquillity of the rest of our population, who watch and protect the goods they own. We really think that the modifications to the code and these measures that are being taken should not make our people lose the peace and safety which they have always enjoyed since the triumph of our revolution.

[Moderator] General, we have here another question which we think you should answer. It is: On what basis will the differentiation between penitentiaries be established, and who will decide which type of sanctioned persons will go to each one?

[Martinez] Well, we would like to state that since the revolution, our government has given specific indications and has worked to have the penal establishments in our country to which people who have committed crimes are sentenced make available to inmates proper treatment and respect for personal dignity. In addition, these establishments are to provide a process of reeducation that will permit inmates to be completely reintegrated into our society. Of course, not all penal establishments are the same, since the differentiation being asked about is determined by the social danger of the crime committed, by the previous criminal record of the author of the crime, and by the conduct of the convict in a penal establishment in the course of serving out his sentence. In terms of classification of penal establishments, there are places where young people ages 16 to 27 serve their sentences so that they will not be subject to negative influence from adults. There are also penal establishments for women where they serve their sentences. In addition, there is a type of penal establishment for those persons who are charged and being held in provisional detention, under a preventive measure order.

We must emphasize that the decision on where each sanctioned person goes is determined by the current penal rules for the penal establishments of the Ministry of the Interior.

[Moderator] Because of its nature, we would also like Gen Martinez Gil to answer the next question. The question reads like this: Which type of prisoners will benefit from the reform of the code with regard to its retroactive application?

[Martinez] Well, we can state, report, that as established in one of the articles of the new penal code, and as summarized in the provisions of the law of our Republic, the retroactive character of the law can be applied to the defendant, the accused, the person sanctioned, when he would benefit by it. Here's an example. Let's say a person was sentenced to 3 years for a certain crime. If the time for that crime in the new code is, let's say, 2 years, and he has already served 2 years, he will immediately be set free. There are other people who are presently serving time; when the new code is applied, if the terms for the maximum sentence for their crime have been reduced, and the sanction in the new code is also reduced, they will benefit and conditional release can be proposed, as long as the minimum time for that type of crime has been served. Here is another example: The cases of first-time offenders who have served half of their sentences can be reviewed and conditional release proposed. Obviously, if the new code has halved the sentence, the accused person will benefit.

Take, for example, a repeat offender whose conduct in the penal establishments has been good, impeccable. If the sentence for the crime that he committed is reduced, and he has already served, according to the new code, two-thirds of it, conditional release can be proposed. There are also cases involving people who committed a crime before age 20; if the sentence for the crime for which they were sanctioned is now reduced, and they have served one- third of it, conditional release can be proposed for them. One of the articles of the new code establishes that sanctions of reprimand and of fines up to 200 pesos do not constitute a criminal record. There might be people serving their sentences in penitentiaries who, when the new code is put into effect, will stop being repeaters and multiple repeaters when their criminal record disappears. They can also benefit from the new code and application of conditional release. That is what we can say. We think that a significant portion of the country's penal population that has been sanctioned can benefit from the new penal code.

[Begin recording] [Moderator] Comrade Vilma, how are jobs guaranteed to ex-convicts, and who is responsible for this?

[Espin] As you know, the responsibility for this lies with the State Committee for Labor and Wages [as heard]. There are organizations at the national, provincial, and municipal levels that have the responsibility within the departments of the people's assembly. Naturally, they are also part of the prevention commissions. At the municipal level, there is even a directive, a communique, from the Ministry of the Interior to these organizations referring to ex-convicts. The work centers that can place an individual, especially at the municipal level, find them jobs.

In the case of minors who have been in a reeducation center for a while, the Ministry of the Interior also takes care of this. They communicate with the commissions, and fundamentally with the labor and wages organ, the Ministry of Education, the community-based educational organizations, to tell them that these young people will be under the custody of their parents. If they have been set free, it is possible to reintegrate them into society. This integration should be made easier. [end recording]

[Moderator] The next question is very interesting; this is what it asks: Crimes against property are the most frequent at this time. What criteria does the new code follow regarding this? We would like Dr Aroldo Lores, from the Attorney General's Office, to answer this question.

[Lores] Yes. In examining crimes against property, which, as you said, are the most frequently committed in our society, we started with an analysis of the sanctions established for each one of the types of crime covered in the category of crimes against patrimonial rights, or as they are commonly known, crimes against property. In this reexamination of the type of conduct that really entails enough danger to be severely sanctioned, some sanctions were increased.

As an example, we could cite the case of theft involving violence. Sanctions were augmented for certain types. In other cases involving slight social danger, the sanctions were modified to make them more rational. For instance, in aggravated circumstances where the property involved is socialist property, these cases were excluded from the legislation. This was based on the fact that the immense majority of the property in our society is socialist property and the old code established aggravated circumstances for cases involving the theft of socialist property and hence considerably more severe sanctions. Aggravated circumstances do not appear in the new penal code.

In addition, as Dr Amaro Salup explained, an analysis was made of the type of conduct that entailed very little social danger. The first-time offender who steals either socialist or personal property of reduced value is removed from penal jurisdiction. In these cases, an administrative sanction, an administrative fine three times the value of the theft, will be applied.

[Moderator] Dr Escalona, the following question is related to the topic discussed by Dr Lores. We would like to address it to you. What crimes will be sanctioned more severely when the penal code goes into effect?

[Escalona] The committee that worked on the modification of the penal code took into account that crimes against society are, as noted in our conversation here tonight, the most numerous, the ones that most affect our population, and the ones that most directly affect our population. However, because of their number and level of danger, they are the least dangerous to society. Yet we should protect our economy. You will find one or two cases that have been tried in our courts in the code, cases

that refer to embezzlement, misappropiation, improper use of state resources, and so forth. In this way we have increased the sanctions for embezzlement. Sanctions have been increased for a new kind of crime, misappropriation, that refers to the theft of property transported in vehicles from the warehouses to a commercial unit, etc. But we have also increased the sanctions for attacks against police officials in such a way that in the case of an attack on a police official who, in the exercise of his duties, is the victim of an attack and dies as a result, it will not be considered as homicide in the new penal code, but as murder.

[Moderator] Our next question reads: Is the death penalty retained in the new penal code that will go into effect on 30 April? Who will it be applied to? Dr Escalona, we would like you to answer this one.

[Escalona] The death penalty is retained in the new penal code in the case of crimes against the security of the state. Evidently, there is nothing right now that might lead us to think aggression against the country is going to cease. In a given moment, certain events may repeat themselves that might endanger the security of our nation, of our leaders, etc.

Cuba cannot lay down its defense weapons. So, it must be pointed out that the penal code modifications retain and view crimes against the security of the state in the same manner as before. The application of the death penalty has been restricted to a group of crimes covered in the present code. The death penalty remains for common crimes in the cases of murder and for rape or child molestation involving violence as a result of which the victim receives serious injuries. In the case of rape, this penalty remains when the victim is under 12 years of age. In the case of child molestation, it pertains when the victim is a young person, an adolescent under 14 years of age.

So, specifically, the death penalty is retained only for the common crimes of rape—in this case, in extreme circumstances—for child molestation involving violence, and for murder. In the case of crimes against the security of the state, the death penalty remains unchanged.

[Moderator] Here's another question that we would like to address to Dr Escalona. Undoubtedly, with the code reform, the powers of the judges are substantially increased. Could you tell us whether there are plans to perfect the work of the judges?

[Escalona] Of the approximately 600 professional judges in Cuba, 125 are newly appointed judges, recent young graduates who have done their social service with notable success, and who dare to face this difficult career. We are confident that what we have done with regard to the training of these judges, their technical training, will make it possible—and this is the way we have put it in the code—for us to be fully confident that they will know how to make adequate use of the powers we are vesting in them.

In particular, we have confidence in our young judges, trained by our revolution, without complicity with... [rewords] without the bad habits of the past, who have been educated in a new, fresh spirit, with a desire to hand down justice. These are young judges who are taking courses, who are learning. Life will, of course, teach them and leave a mark upon them.

[Moderator] Comrade Severo Aguirre, we would like to know your views as to how long this reformed code will be in effect.

[Aguirre del Cristo] In truth, as a revolutionary, as a communist, we would like the life of the code to be as short as possible. This is because we would like our people to be educated to such a level of responsibility, in such a collective spirit, that they may live collectively, respect and make themselves respected, both legally and from the point of view of community living. Of course, this task will take a long time. It is impossible to predict at this moment how long the code will be in effect.

The process to educate the public will be very long and intensive. As Comrade Fidel Castro has said, it has to begin in infancy, at the child care center. This will make it possible to do without the penal code. For now, we cannot make any other predictions. We can speak of our desire, our aspiration, our hope that the day will come when we no longer need any penal code because each citizen will know how to conduct himself. All citizens will be responsible for respecting and making others respect the rights of all, including the right to personal property.

[Moderator] All that remains for us is to thank you for your participation in this panel, which has been devoted to explaining aspects of considerable interest in connection with the penal code reform. Thank you for tuning in, dear viewers. Good evening.

Commentary Says AIDS Not Problem in Country

FL281358 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 26 Mar 88

[Station commentary]

[Text] In the past few days, we have heard many different comments in the street regarding the illness we commonly know as AIDS. Thus, we feel compelled to say a few things on the subject in today's commentary.

First of all, we want to reiterate that AIDS is not a health problem in Cuba. Ever since the illness began to surface as an extremely serious phenomenon in other areas of the world, our country's top leaders directed the execution of a national program for the prevention and control

of the disease. The measures made it possible to determine the high risk groups, to study the spread of the virus among them, and to eliminate eventual infection through the donation of contaminated blood.

However, are these measures an absolute guarantee against AIDS? Unfortunately, no. Without wishing to alarm anyone, we have the obligation and duty to say this. We already know that the usual ways of getting AIDS are through sexual relations or through contaminated blood. However, we wish to emphasize a certain aspect, and that is the following: AIDS can be contracted in normal sexual relations between a man and a woman if one of the two is infected. What is more, it has been proven that AIDS is spreading much more quickly through and in this type of relationship than in others. In cases detected in our country, for example, statistics show this is true.

What implications does this fact have? Above all, the importance of the cooperation of the people, the awareness that we are vulnerable to the disease, and that, therefore, we must ensure that each person adopts the maximum precautions directed by the country's health authorities. These measures must be particularly kept in mind in those places most frequently visited by tourists and foreign visitors.

As we said in the beginning, AIDS is not a health problem in Cuba, but it is necessary to act with the responsibility and seriousness that this matter deserves.

Havana Defense Day Activities Reported

FL281437 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1100 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Hundreds of thousands of Havana residents have taken part in Defense Day.

[Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish at 1100 GMT on 28 March specifies that "more than 400,000 Havana residents took part in combat readiness tasks on Defense Day yesterday"].

The full range of operations planned for war contingencies were executed in six defense zones of six municipalities where the exercises took place. The combat readiness of the regiments and independent units of the MTT [Territorial Troops Militia] and the production and defense brigades played an important role during the Defense Day observance in Havana City Province, which hopes to declare itself ready for defense, first stage, in October.

Other provinces also observed Defense Day, including Cienfuegos and Pinar del Rio, which declared several defense zones ready for defense, second stage.

Some installations were inaugurated in Pinar for the training of the MTT as part of the war of all the people. Fidel Ramos, first party secretary in the province, made a tour of several municipalities and hailed the spirit of struggle and combativeness of the population.

Humberto Miguel Fernandez, first secretary of the Cienfuegos PCC Provincial Committee, presented San Blas, located in the foothills of the Escambray, with a certificate declaring the town ready for defense, second stage.

Haiti

Further Reports on Arrest of PDCH Leader

FL282156 Port-au-Prince Radio Nationale in Creole 1400 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] We will read you a press release from Port-au-Prince.

Dr Joseph Douze, a member of the opposition Haitian Christian Democratic Party [PDCH], was arrested last Saturday after the forces of order searched his residence, where they found a great deal of material which was highly combustible. We learned this in the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince.

The spokesman who announced this—an officer from the Jean-Jacques Dessalines Battalion who was in the group that conducted the search—said that Douze was the vice president of the PDCH, and he showed, on national television, the discovered material. There were many weapons, including AR-15 rifles; batteries; special electrical wire; and even a remote-controlled detonating device.

The military spokesman implied that all these things, all the explosives, may have been intended for use to cause disorders in the country.

Douze Removed From Party Rolls

FL282323 Port-au-Prince Radio Soleil Network in French 1325 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Monitored in progress]

[Text] ...where electrical detonators for explosives were discovered, announced a military spokesman over the national television station that very evening.

The spokesman, an officer from the Jean-Jacques Dessalines Battalion, a detachment of which conducted the search of the house occupied by Mr Douze—a luxurious villa in the mountains in the Thomassin area—introduced Douze as the vice president of the PDCH and exhibited on television the material. There were detonators, batteries, special electrical wire, a remote-control apparatus, ammunition and clips for American AR-15 assault rifles, slingshots and steel pellets, and walkie-talkies. The military spokesman linked this material to an attack using explosives at a bridge in Port-au-Prince on

Tuesday evening, and to the discovery on that same night of a cache of explosives and two AR-15 rifles which led to the arrest of three people, one of whom, Mr (Jocelyn Beauchard), is also a PDCH official.

For its part, the PDCH thinks that this business of weapons is part of an overall, historical, political line. It is not far removed from the scenario set up in 1980 by the Duvalier regime to stop the people's revolution. Paid individuals were able to lower themselves to the point where they claimed to be arsonists in the hire of the PDCH, in order to justify the dictatorial government's plan directed against the PDCH, continues the note.

The PDCH says: This new trick, through its ugliness and its awkwardness, reveals to intelligent people its level and its goal, because it reeks of a logic of infiltration and betrayal.

After following, like everyone else, the mise-en-scene the arrest of (Jocelyn Beauchard)—(?who) implicated Dr Joseph Douze—constitutes, one can easily see this.

The party's Executive Central Committee, meeting in special session and after deliberation, is convinced that party member Dr Joseph Douze has fallen under the dispositions of Articles 24, Paragraph B, 28, and 31 of the party statutes, and has decided to strike him off the roles while awaiting the sanction of the Council of Representatives, in conformity with Article 62 of the party statutes. This is because, continues the note, the PDCH remains a party based on nonviolence.

PDCH Secretary General View

FL282345 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1700 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] The PDCH secretary general, whom we contacted by phone today, feels the Douze affair is a setup, the obvious goal of which is, we quote, to destablize the PDCH, which is always in the vanguard of the legitimate demands of the Haitian people, end quote.

PDCH Secretary General (Menard Roberts) says Dr Douze's activities have nothing to do with the PDCH leadership. Dr Douze, who was arrested Saturday by the authorities, was the PDCH vice president.

We do not cast blame on those who use the armed struggle to attain a political goal, just as we have nothing to reproach the contras or the Salvadoran rebels, but the PDCH as a political party does not adhere to this kind of activity, said Mr (Roberts).

[Begin recording] [(Menard Roberts)] I think, and this is the opinion of most of my colleagues, that this is a setup. It is a maneuver to destabilize the party because we are practically the only opposition and they don't want any (?opposition). They want to have carte blanche to do whatever they want. [passage omitted]

All these things they say, and all this nonsense they attribute to the party, is aimed, precisely, at intimidating people, because they are afraid of the people's revolution. They are afraid of our work in the field. They tried to use corruption and that didn't work. The party takes measures to guarantee the integrity of its members through social activity that has been operative since 1978. [passage omitted]

[Reporter] Mr (Menard), Reverend Sylvio Claude said, in a statement when Mr Francois Manigat was elected, that he was in favor of a constructive position. And you just said the party's doctrinal line is one of nonviolence; but you also said that you did not blame those who thought that the armed struggle is necessary in order to arrive at victory, or to make demands. Does this mean that the PDCH would collaborate with an organization...

[(Menard Roberts), interrupting] Not at all! Not at all! We have received offers in the past, under Jean-Claude Duvalier, which we refused, because we respect our doctrinal and ideological line, which cannot be modified except by a convention. We won't say we could never arrive at that extreme, but for the time being, it is out of the question. Out of the question! What's more, we (?repudiate) the armed struggle. We cannot collaborate with those who kill people if we are speaking out against these injustices.

[Reporter] To conclude, I would like to know something about Dr Douze. Is he a high-ranking PDCH official? Is he the vice president? Is that correct?

[(Menard Roberts)] He has not yet been in that position 1 month, but he has been a member of the party since August 1986, and he also worked with the overseas affiliates. He was vice president of the overseas affiliates. When Mr (Desarmes) resigned, we thought it would be a good idea to name him vice president temporarily, while awaiting the party convention that is to take place in September of 1988. [end recording]

PDCH President Comments

FL290010 Port-au-Prince Radio Antilles-Internationales in French 1800 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] Contacted in connection with the Douze arrest, PDCH President Reverend Sylvio C. Claude told us that he is not surprised by this affair, which falls within the framework of a general political line. [passage omitted]

Let's listen to Reverend Sylvio C. Claude. [passage omitted]

However, certain observers have been wondering from where does the PDCH leader know Dr Douze, and how did Douze come to be the PDCH vice president. Reverend Sylvio Claude answered this question.

[Begin Claude recording] I first met Dr Douze in Miami. A preacher who is a colleague and a friend of mine knew him. He is a man of truth, who was struggling overseas, who was making television shows for the Miami community. It was even he who had Manigat on his television show, introduced him, and so forth. He was in the struggle [words indistinct], according to what I have learned. It was a fellow preacher, a friend, Reverend (Albin), who introduced him to me in Miami. We met, and then he joined the party. We have several affiliates abroad, and we had asked him to take care of them for us. Then he began coming to Haiti often during the electoral campaign. He would come and stay for a month or 2, go back, and so forth. He has a residence here. Since we came to see that he (?was) interesting, when a vacancy occurred—(?just some) 15 days ago, on 16 March, we held a meeting and we appointed him vice president.

There is one thing that is clear: Do you think that if I had known that he was involved in this kind of activity, I would have (?taken him) for a vice president? In politics, you don't place your trust in people. You never really know anyone, when it comes to politics. [passage omitted] You can only base yourself on how devoted he is, what he does, how militant he is. [passage omitted] [end recording]

More on Foreign Drug Traffickers Arrests

FL290020 Port-au-Prince Radio Metropole in French 1700 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Nine Latin American drug traffickers were arrested by the police last 17 March in the outskirts of Port-au-Prince.

The nine traffickers—five Colombians, two Americans of Cuban origin, a Venezuelan, and a Dominican woman—who lived in a villa in the hills of Port-au-Prince—had pistols and a machinegun, with silencers and ammunition. A high-powered transmitter and annotated maps of the area were also found by the police. This took place at the beginning of last week.

Costa Rica

Arias, Spain's Gonzalez Continue Discussions

Meet Ex-L.A. Presidents

PA281407 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0045 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Today the Costa Rican and Spanish presidents and two former Latin American presidents held a meeting at Costa Rica's Guanamar beach and called for a negotiated solution to the 10-month political crisis in Panama.

Former Venezuelan President Carlos Andres Perez stated to the press at that Costa Rican Pacific coast beach that the solution to the Panamanian crisis should develop "within days."

The former Venezuelan president had met with Spanish Government leader Felipe Gonzalez, Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, and former Costa Rican President Daniel Oduber.

Perez stated that the Panamanian crisis "must be resolved soon and in accordance with the best interests of the Panamanians." However, he did not specify whether the solution requires General Manuel Antonio Noriega to leave the country. He said: "That matter is not our concern."

At the meeting, which was not attended by former Colombian President Alfonso Lopez Michelsen because he was sick, the participants analyzed Latin American problems, but they mainly studied the possibility of finding a negotiated solution to the Panamanian crisis.

President Oscar Arias stated that Panama Defense Forces Commander Noriega was willing to leave the country.

Arias noted: "He [Noriega] has said so publicly; he has said he would consider the possibility of studying the offer to live in Spain made by Felipe Gonzalez."

All the political figures present at the meeting agreed that Panama needs a negotiated solution that will satisfy all the groups and that, according to Perez, "preserves the validity of the canal treaties."

He added: "We are concerned with the attainment of a solution that is not pressured by any type of coercion."

However, the former Venezuelan president and candidate in the next presidential elections from the present governing party—the social democratic Democratic Action Party—also stated that the solution is in Panamanian hands and "of course in those of the United States." He added that "we cannot be at ease when we watch economic intervention in Panama."

Carlos Andres Perez noted that the Panamanian economy "has been definitely distorted" and that "the financial center will not return to Panama any more."

Oscar Arias stated that Perez, Oduber, and Lopez Michelsen have held permanent contacts with Noriega but none of them delivered any message from the general or the Panamanian opposition to Felipe Gonzalez.

Oduber admitted he had received a letter from the Civic Crusade, the Panamanian opposition, expressing the need for the installation of a transition government that will lead to elections and for legal reforms that will guarantee elections that are truly free.

The Civic Crusade also said in that letter that Noriega must resign and be replaced by someone who will give guarantees to all political groups.

On another subject, Oscar Arias agreed that "there will be pressures to turn back" the recent agreement to cease hostilities for 60 days scheduled to start on 1 April, which was signed by the Nicaraguan Government and the "contras" in Sapoa.

He added: "I believe there are many people who are not satisfied with this agreement—all those who do not believe in dialogue and who want the conflict to be resolved militarily cannot be satisfied with what has happened in Sapoa."

For Arias the agreement is evidence "that dialogue is the solution and the road to be followed."

Arias also made reference to those who, "like my country's press," believe the agreement was attained because 3,200 U.S. soldiers were sent to Honduras or because the U.S. Congress is about to approve (humanitarian) aid to the contras. He said: "This is not my interpretation."

Discuss Panama Situation

PA281828 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1735 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] San Jose, 28 Mar (ACAN-EFE)—The talks between Costa Rican President Oscar Arias and Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez have taken longer than foreseen and this has delayed Gonzalez' departure.

Gonzalez, who ends his 3-day official visit to Costa Rica today, and Arias had scheduled a news conference at Juan Santamaria International Airport's Diplomatic Room at 1000 (1600 GMT), 1 hour prior to the Spanish leader's departure.

Today a Costa Rican Government spokesman reported that the talks between the two leaders, also attended by former Presidents Carlos Andres Perez of Venezuela and Daniel Oduber of Costa Rica, lasted longer than expected.

The official spokesman said: "Today, they still had some loose ends which they were trying to tie up before holding the news conference."

It was unofficially reported that a representative of the Panamanian Government arrived last night at Guanamar, a private beach on the Pacific coast 340 km from this capital where the meeting is being held.

It has been reported that the arrival of this representative could have prolonged the discussions, whose main topic is the conflict Panama has been facing for the past 10 months, in view of the insistence of the opposition Civic Crusade that General Manuel Antonio Noriega, chief of the Panama Defense Forces, leave.

It was reported that before Gonzalez leaves the country, an attempt will be made by Gonzalez, Arias, Perez, and Oduber—all of them social democratic leaders—to get a full picture of the Panamanian situation.

The four politicians are studying a negotiated solution to this conflict, taking into account the respect for the Torrijos-Carter Canal Treaties signed in 1977, the social achievements, and the free will of Panama's citizens to choose their leaders without the intervention of the military sector.

The official spokesman announced that Arias and Gonzalez delayed the news conference for approximately 3 hours and after that, Gonzalez will return to his country on a private flight.

Airport News Conference

PA282313 San Jose Radio Reloj in Spanish 1929 GMT 28 Mar 88

["Part" of news conference held by President Oscar Arias and Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez with local and foreign reporters at the Diplomatic Room of the Juan Santamaria International Airport in San Jose—live]

[Text] [Reporter] We would like to know what specific proposal concerning the Panamanian conflict has been made after these meetings in Guanamar over the last few days? We also want to know to what degree Spain has committed itself or is willing to commit itself toward promoting a process of democratization in Panama?

[Arias] Dear journalists, I and the entire Costa Rican people feel very happy with the visit of Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez and his wife, Carmen. We only regret that it has been too short a visit; it only lasted a few hours [as heard]. However, we made very good use of those few hours.

We exchanged views on many topics; obviously, the Central American topics were perhaps the most important issues on our agenda. We not only talked about Central America and the future of the peace plan; we also talked about Panama, our sister nation south of Costa Rica.

As you know, we met with former Presidents Carlos Andres Perez and Daniel Oduber, who along with former Colombian President Lopez Michelsen played a very important role in the negotiations of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties some years ago. For many years, they have been acting as mediators at least to establish a bridge to find a peaceful solution to the conflict our sister nation, Panama, is experiencing.

Perhaps after very hard thinking about the best solution for Panama, we decided—and I think Carlos Andres Perez will carry out those negotiations within the next few hours—to ask Archbishop McGrath if he would help us by serving as mediator not only between the Civic Crusade and the Solis Palma government, but also between all the opposition political parties.

Those of us who believe in dialogues and those of us who have faith in and trust that dialogues can do miracles—as we recently saw in Sapoa—believe the role Msgr McGrath can play as a mediator—as an intermediary to reconcile positions that seem irreconcilable, but undoubtedly are not—is important. Archbishop McGrath is very important. The truth is that we want to find a solution as soon as possible to the anguish and pain Panamanians are experiencing. We, Felipe and I, believe if Msgr McGrath accepts the role of mediator, a very important step toward the resolution of the Panamanian conflict will be made.

[Moderator] Mr Fernando Jauregui of the Spanish newspaper EL PAIS.

[Gonzalez] I would only like to add one word, because I think we are directly affected by this. I want to reiterate something everyone knows: Spain has said it is willing to receive General Noriega, should this be one of the conditions of the internal commitment of the Panamanians. We have said this on a previous occasion, and wish to reiterate it now, always respecting a decision that would be taken by the Panamanian people and in solidarity with the Panamanian people for the reestablishment, naturally, of the supremacy of civilian power and democracy in Panama.

[Jauregui] Yesterday, talking with President Arias at Carrillo Beach, we had the impression that at least President Arias was optimistic concerning an immediate resolution of the Panamanian crisis based on the possible departure of Gen Noriega to Spain. Prime Minister Gonzalez, I would like to ask you whether or not you share President Arias' optimism right now and whether

there has been, or will in the next few hours, be a direct meeting between Gen Noriega and Carlos Andres Perez or any of the others who met at Carrillo Beach?

[Gonzalez] You have known me for a long time. When dealing with politics, we have to pay much more attention to results. I think we can be reasonably optimistic about a prompt solution to the Panamanian problem. Everyone knows it is a serious situation that increasingly deteriorates each day. We not only have to take the current problem into account, but also the difficulty of Panama's recovery. How much will it cost? Therefore, when we were discussing the problem, we thought of promoting some initiatives. As President Arias stated, some of those initiatives are already carefully and willingly being carried out.

[Moderator] Enrique Mora from TASS.

[Mora] Prime Minister Gonzalez, in the last few years the United States has taken specific steps against Central American governments and peoples it dislikes, as has happened with the Nicaraguan Government and more recently with Panama's Gen Noriega. How do you view this U.S. attitude? Do you think the U.S. position has any support in international law?

[Gonzalez] I believe that at the dinner toast President Arias offered in my honor you heard me [as heard] say that it is very suitable for countries such as ours to always remember respect for international law, because we can guarantee peace and stability for our countries only if we respect international law. Therefore, from the viewpoint of principles, it is clear we must oppose any type of interference of one nation against another.

However, I want to tell you that we must carry out efforts to try to resolve problems instead of inflaming them. Every time there is a disagreement concerning U.S. policy, I have clearly stated my opinion in every single case. Therefore, my opinion has been permanently and repeatedly expressed. However, I do not want to set up a policy of permanent criticism, which would hinder the possibilities of resolving some of the conflicts. Therefore, I want you to clearly know that I believe we must respect international law. International legal order is a key element in maintaining peace and preserving peoples' independence and sovereignty. I have said everything with this. Now I believe we must insist that the agreement reached among Nicaraguans—the Sapoa agreement is very important—must be consolidated as a decisive step on the road to peace in a country that deserves and has earned its right to peace through many years of struggle.

Therefore, I believe we must make an effort—not only wish for, but make an effort—for the consolidation and development of those agreements to grant peace and freeedom to the Nicaraguan people. No one must hinder that agreement. When I say no one, I mean no one—and that includes everyone.

[Moderator] Danilo Arias of LA REPUBLICA, Costa Rica.

[D. Arias] For Prime Minister Gonzalez: Talking about the United States, I read somewhere about your recent condemnation of the U.S. military presence in Honduras. What about the incongruity that in Spain—at Torrejon and Rota—there are more than 13,000 U.S. soldiers on military bases? How could you explain this to those of us who do not understand?

[Gonzalez] You are mistaken from the outset. You say you have read that I have recently condemned the U.S. military presence in Honduras. If you read this recently, you probably did not read it as as direct quote of mine. Anyway, I do not agree with the presence, under existing conditions, of foreign presence—that you might have read—in countries that have arrived at agreements such as Esquipulas, which, among other things, specifies that there should be no foreign presence in the area.

Regarding Spain, which is a sovereign country, it does not have, as you calculate, 13,000 U.S. soldiers—but there could be 13,000, 8,000, or 5,000. We have just arrived at a reduction agreement—always from a respectful bilateral relation, of a balanced bilateral sovereignty relation. We have just arrived at a reduction agreement that counters the information you have at hand. In any case, there will be a continuance of that bilateral relation with the United States, which emerges from a sovereign will of both peoples that have reached agreements—concerning bases that are Spanish and that the United States will use for a predetermined time.

[Moderator] Rosa Paz of EFE agency, Spain.

[Paz] On numerous occasions recently you have said there will be pressures against carrying out the Sapoa cease-fire agreements. I would like to know if you have firm details. What are these facts? Where are the pressures going to come from? Have any pressures been made on the remaining Central American countries to try and support this Sapoa agreement and the arrival of Nicaraguans to [words indistinct]?

[Arias] We have indeed talked a great deal about the success of the Sapoa agreements, on the need for the entire world to support this agreement—the agreement reached between the Managua Sandinist government and members of the Nicaraguan Resistance [RN]—because we believe this is a very important step, maybe the most important agreement since we signed Esquipulas II in August 1987. In order to be able to comply with the rest of the Guatemalan accords, the indispensable first step is an end to hostilities, a cease-fire. During these last few days we have not spoken—either here in San Jose or at Carrillo Beach in Guanacaste—with any leader from Central America or any other part of the world. However, we have congratulated each other, because the Sapoa agreements confirm to us that dialogue is the solution. If we have confidence in dialogue—

which is the instrument of rational people to sort out conflicts—if we support it and there is a will, that dialogue will be successful. Then the day will not be far away when 27 million human beings in Central America will be able to enjoy the peace they yearn for so much.

I believe the Sapoa agreements tell us that dialogue is capable of yielding results, of being successful—if there is goodwill, if there is really a capacity to yield and compromise. This is different than those who claim the Sapoa agreements were reached because of the imminent arrival of fresh RN aid. I have read this in some of our editorials in the local press, but I believe this is not the best way to interpret the Sapoa success, because I believe the U.S. congressional contra aid has never been farther away.

It has also been said, using other types of arguments, that it was the presence of 3,200 soldiers in Honduran territory that served as pressure to arrive at an agreement in Sapoa. I belive the cause-effect relationship, the correlation that may exist between 3,000 soldiers—or 3,200 soldiers—in Honduran territory and the success of dialogue in Sapoa, is the same correlation between the whereabouts of Halley's comet and the success of Sapoa.

The truth is that this is not the case. This was not what ensured the will and success of Sapoa. This success is a result only of the fact that if Nicaraguans sit down to talk, they themselves are capable of resolving their problems. We demonstrated this in August 1987 when we, the Central Americans, arrived at an agreement to bring peace to Central America through negotiation, by diplomatic means, by politics—not through guerrillas.

Therefore, Felipe, Carlos Andres, and myself—and all who believe in a negotiated solution to sorting out the Central American conflicts—really feel hopeful and optimistic that, without a doubt, it is possible to attain peace for Central America.

[Gonzalez] I believe there is another side to this issue, which is always difficult to discuss, naturally. I believe any agreement in itself has a positive aspect and also has some enemies or obstacles. The agreement is very valuable and positive. We could support this agreement by encouraging the parties that signed it to continue along the path they have just started and to comply with it. Why should we not say we are aware there are some who dislike the agreement? This means there is a sector that would not like to have the agreement implemented and that would rather see a certain climate of tension prevail.

Moreover, there have been statements that have not helped the agreement. Such statements have even been made by the U.S. Administration. I believe it is not right to reject an alternative that achieves or means an important step toward bringing peace and democratization. We are therefore giving our support to the leaders who signed and took these kind of steps by openly expressing our support for and solidarity with the path they have chosen. Saying this from Costa Rica, if you allow me to say so, has a special significance. [Words indistinct] in this region, Costa Rica is a country that enjoys stability and democracy. It is obvious that here in Costa Rica one can feel the concern for extending past the country's northern and southern borders its stability, democracy, peace, and domestic dialogue.

We are therefore making our contribution, which is perhaps the main satisfaction I feel about this trip. We are contributing—from the center of Costa Rica's own stability and democracy—to promoting peace and democracy in the region.

[Moderator] (Marisel Sequeira) from IPS.

[(Sequeira)] This is a question for Prime Minister Gonzalez. The SELA is meeting today to study and eventually to condemn the U.S. economic measures against Panama. It has been said these measures affect not only Panama but all Latin American nations, because they endanger the region's economic sovereignty. First, do you believe Latin America's economic sovereignty is in danger or is being attacked? Second, are you planning a stopover in Caracas?

[Gonzalez] I am going to start with the second part of your question. No, I am not planning a stopover in Caracas. I wish to clarify that Spain does not belong to SELA.

It is obvious to the whole world: I do not believe in economic sanctions. I have said it many times, and I will repeat it in statements that may sound somewhat boastful. I believe the current effects on Panama are not the result of the embargo. The embargo could have medium-term effects that could create serious problems for Panama. In the final analysis, one must take into account that this or that leader will not be the ones who will suffer the most from this kind of situation. They may suffer, too, but the whole nation suffers with them. I therefore believe one should not interfere too much or too little in aspects that could directly affect a nation.

That one could or may make a reflection on a country's sovereignty or economic independence seems legitimate to me. I do not want to go so far as to recognize the world's essentially interdependent nature. Nor do I want to predict any SELA resolution. SELA is meeting at this moment and will adopt the resolutions its members will naturally and freely adopt. I believe they will discuss two issues: this one [the U.S. economic sanctions] and a possible democratic solution in Panama. The two aforementioned issues are therefore being discussed.

[Moderator] William Cespedes from Radio Reloj.

[Cespedes] Prime Minister Gonzalez, as Costa Rican President Arias already announced, Archbishop McGrath's mediation has been requested. Should this

not yield the expected positive results, would the Socialist International propose any formulas to search for a solution that would lead the Panamanian people to a democratic path?

[Gonzalez] I cannot speak on behalf of the Socialist International. If you wish me to tell you my view—not that of the Socialist International—I believe the Socialist International may not be the right mediator. Among other reasons, since the objective would be to reach an agreement among very diverse political forces that belong to other international groups, it is obvious these political forces would not agree to this kind of mediation. It would seem quite logical to me not to agree to a mediation of this nature. Furthermore, I do not believe the Socialist International would consider doing it. In any case, I would be available with others—Liberals, Christian Democrats, etc.—to make an effort to help in the democratization process but not to act as a mediator. But let us not expect a failure; let us expect some accomplishments from this process.

[Moderator] Vicente Mateos from Radio Antena Tres in Spain.

[Mateos] These questions are for both leaders, because it seems to me some questions asked by other reporters have not been answered.

Specifically, yesterday's meeting was attended by Carlos Andres Perez, who seems to be Noriega's representative, and by Mr Oduber, who reportedly had, as President Arias said, some information on the most recent Civic Crusade position. I would like to know: Was any sort of answer or formula agreed upon during the meeting that could allow Noriega's departure from Panama? I would like to know if—this is a question that has not been answered yet—Mr Perez has been appointed to discuss these matters with Noriega.

I also would like to know if you have any information on or if you could name those who are attempting to boycott the Sapoa agreement. In a luncheon with journalists yesterday, the Spanish prime minister said it is necessary for the U.S. Administration to follow a new line in its Central American policy. Do you both believe it is time to make a formal request—for example, President Arias said the Central American presidents would shortly hold a meeting—and ask the U.S. Administration to change its Central American policy?

[Gonzalez] If you wish, Mr President, I will answer first. Sometimes, it appears some questions are not answered. Actually, one answers what one thinks should be answered. A journalist obviously has a right to ask questions and insist on an answer. A politician has a right to answer what he thinks he has to answer.

Having clarified this, I must tell you I think it is an erroneous interpretation of the situation—and I am not going to contribute to this interpretation—to say Carlos Andres Perez is Noriega's representative. Perez is not acting on Noriega's behalf or representing him. This should not be included in an analysis of any question.

We have clearly said we discussed the Panamanian problem yesterday. We reached some agreements that should be understood as agreements among some people who do not have any political responsibility in their governments and others who have political responsibility in their governments. It was a meeting of people who have had and continue to have a certain amount of responsibility and who want to make some goodwill efforts to resolve a problem. These people want to resolve the Panamanian problem with solidarity and with shared common values.

All of us who met believe democracy and civil power should be—logically speaking—the supreme power of all democratic society. We have taken an initiative, and President Arias has given you an idea of what we want. That is what can be said and should be said, if we want such an initiative to be serious and not just a temporary one. We said what we thought we could and should say. Subsequent events will show if we have begun an initiative that will yield a result similar to what we want. Obviously, when we do not say anything further, it is because we feel not saying more can help us find a reasonable solution to the Panamanian problem, which is what worries us.

[Words indistinct] there are names of those opposed to the Sapoa meeting. Although I have some names in my mind, I assure you I will not be so bold as to name them. That is not my role.

Obviously, it is not my duty to make charges against people. You are carefully following—not to say much more than I am—what has been reported in the media. The international press recently said there have been some very positive proposals, to describe them in a way that will not offend anyone. I do not want to offend anyone. That is what concerns us.

In conclusion, I was the one who said that perhaps at a given moment the United States would begin a positive regional initiative. Such an initiative, which might be a change in U.S. policy, probably would be very well received by all the parties involved, including the Nicaraguan Government and others.

I also told this to the U.S. press so there would not be any confusion. I even said I did not think that initiative would cost very much.

There has been a U.S. initiative for a peaceful solution to the extremely serious Mideast conflict. It is a complete package. Without describing the contents, I think this it is a very respectable initiative, and it should be supported.

I believe—this is my personal opinion, and I cannot transfer this responsibility to anyone—it would be much simpler to begin an initiative or to make a gesture in this region, which wants a peaceful solution. I would like this to happen, but I am not going to dare propose that the United States change its policy. It is a sovereign country that has free presidential elections every 4 years. The United States is powerful enough—as you well know—to decide on its own policy. This is my opinion of what I think should happen in this region. Sooner or later, there will be such an initiative from the U.S. Administration. I would like that to happen as soon as possible, simply because it would spare the region a great toll.

El Salvador

FMLN Commander Roca Interviewed by Venceremos

PA262120 (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador 0000 GMT 24 Mar 88

[Interview with Commander Roberto Roca, member of the FMLN High Command; date and place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] Commander Roca, how do you explain the fact that during the electoral campaign, the political parties strongly lashed out at each other with charges of kidnappings, the murder of Msgr Romero, and large-scale corruption, and that, as soon as the election ended, the party leaders, who had been accusing each other, embraced and congratulated each other? The parties resumed lashing out at each other only 2 days after the election.

[Roca] The answer to that is simple. That happened, first of all, because of the struggle among the parties to grab a number of positions of power from each other. During the entire campaign, the parties reproached each other. They have not told the people anything new. They have simply confirmed what the people already knew. The parties had to do this reluctantly, even at the risk of discrediting the electoral farce, which is nothing more than an instrument of deception. As soon as the electoral farce showed results, they naturally had to embrace each other and make believe they are good friends, that some of them are willing to admit the victory of the others, etc. They had to close ranks, precisely to protect the [electoral] mechanism, their scheme for political domination; that is to say, to give a measure of credence to the electoral farce.

As you have said, this moment was also brief. Immediately afterward came the struggle to keep snatching the booty from each other. They again accused each other of being murderers and corrupt. This occurs in this process even more frequently because other elections are scheduled to take place on short notice. These people have to maintain the necessary mechanisms to take away from each other this and that position. Consequently, we can expect that the struggle of more or less shrill slander—depending on the opportunities available—will continue between the various forces comprising the power that oppresses our people.

This, of course, is advantageous. Little by little, the people have discovered the corrupt nature of the electoral farce of various ruling class groups. We can also expect on a short-term basis that each will try to win the favor of those who have become masters of this country against the people's will—I refer specifically to the Americans. We will see at once how ARENA [Nationalist Republican Alliance] will try to win the favor of the U.S. Embassy and Reagan. We will also see the desperate efforts of the Christian Democratic Party to continue to be sponsored by the U.S. Administration. This current phenomenon, therefore, can be summed up like this: The established regime at all times has demonstrated its complete corruption.

[Reporter] According to the results, the election was won, so to speak, by political parties and sectors that criticized some aspects of the U.S. counterinsurgency project executed in our country by the Christian Democratic Party. How would this electoral result, this reshuffling of power, affect the counterinsurgency project?

[Roca] You must mean the effects on the puppet regime. It is obvious that the counterinsurgency project has sustained a tremendous defeat, not so much because ARENA won, but because the strength of the people's movement has clearly been demonstrated by the Salvadoran people's considerable lack of participation in and indifference to the elections. In addition, with regard to the power of the electoral process to change the formation of the puppet regime, the people's power—increasingly revitalized, rejuvenated, and stronger—has made itself known, both militarily and politically. All the news conferences held before the elections clearly revealed the regime's fear of the increasing power of the people.

All the news conferences held to frighten the people and terrify the masses by telling them that the regime could fall cannot scare the people at all. Those news conferences only reveal the great fear and crisis in which the counterinsurgency regime is immersed.

Those news conferences also made the people aware of their own power and potential. Those who believe the situation will now change and that the puppet regime has a chance to stabilize are mistaken. On the contrary, the electoral results will worsen the regime's crisis. However, the deepening of the regime's crisis will benefit the people, because it will cause the people's struggle to increase.

That has been proved during the struggle over the elections, a struggle that will undoubtedly increase because the extreme misery of our people increasingly leads the various sectors to join the people's struggle.

Moreover, there is a phenomenon that will certainly appear. Some members of the rank and file of the Christian Democratic Party will continue to be determined to benefit from the government's corruption and the power the regime can grant them. However, in view of the specific election results, many members of the Christian Democractic Party rank and file will undoubtedly tend to identify more closely with the people's struggle. This will be a great lesson for the rank and file, because they must distance themselves from corrupt officials, from the United States, and from the American Institute for Free Labor Development.

Thus, the people's movement will not only become more radical and strong, but there will also be an increase in the people's ranks. This will defeat the counterinsurgency project even further, regardless of the reorganization brought about by the current, false elections.

[Reporter] In a previous interview, Commander Joaquin Villalobos said that the election results were a great victory for the FMLN. Some analysts questioned the [word indistinct] peace and the actions the FMLN carried out during the electoral process. What can you say about this?

[Roca] I believe you are talking about the so-called elections boycott?

[Reporter] Of course.

[Roca] Everybody knows that there is a political, military struggle in El Salvador, and that it is a [word indistinct] struggle. Undoubtedly, the political, revolutionary struggle carried out during an electoral process imposed on us by the regime's forces can look like an elections boycott. It would be the same thing whether or not we call it that. If we do not say there is an elections boycott, the regime would say that any political or military action we carry out during the electoral period is an elections boycott. If we say we are boycotting the elections, it is also [words indistinct] that we are seeing reality.

The political struggle is not only carried out during the elections. The political struggle continues at all times, and, therefore, what we have been saying is correct. The struggle against the enemy's political apparatus is a permanent one. That struggle is carried out before, during, and after the elections. Thus, the struggle against the puppet regime's electoral farce is carried out before, during, and after the elections.

We have vigorously said that we believe that elections will be a legitimate resource in our country when power is reorganized. That reorganization must first of all include people's interests. We will continue our struggle against the enemy's political power, which is oppressing our people and pawning our country's sovereignty in order to be able to continue to oppress the people. Therefore, the boycott, the struggle against the regime's various mechanisms of political domination is permanent.

There is an increasing and progressive weakening of the dictatorship's political domination, although it disguises itself under democratic rhetoric. We have emphasized that Duarte's regime is a new type of democracy. It is a dictatorship that wears a mask of democracy. We have been unmasking that dictatorship. We are succeeding in doing so. Showing its discouragement with and lack of participation in the electoral farce, the Salvadoran people are showing that they are becoming increasingly aware of the need to struggle against the dictatorship, despite its change in appearance.

In that respect, for example, the fact that not everyone had their name added to the voter registry, the fact that not all registered voters had obtained their voter identification cards, and the fact that some voters with identification cards did not vote—all of these facts put together, which are not single occurrences but part of a continuous and permanent struggle, add up to an ever increasing unmasking of the farce. Therefore, we shall continue to fight against the mechanisms of political domination used by the dictatorship, which was imposed on our country by the Reagan administration.

[Reporter] Finally, Commander Roberto Roca, what is the FMLN General Command's assessment? What is the FMLN's forecast of events to come?

[Roca] Well, the forecast is that there will be more suffering. The people's fighting spirit will be intensified. There is no doubt that, faced with this progressive intensification—which foreshadows new victories for the popular masses striving to reach legitimate goals in the struggle to achieve basic economic, social, and political rights—faced with this prospect, the dictatorship will seek ways to increase its repression. However, for decades our people have been accustomed to fighting against repression. We know that the best way to fight, the best way to counteract repression is to intensify our struggle. What we are going to see in the coming days is the intensification of the popular struggle against those who traditionally have oppressed and exploited the masses.

In addition, the fact that the popular struggle is going to worsen the crisis will intensify conflicts among the people's enemies. Already [ARENA President Roberto] D'Aubuisson himself in a news conference—that is, in a prepared press release—began to question whether other political factions, such as the Christian Democrats or the PCN [National Conciliation Party], might be perpetrating electoral fraud in some areas to deprive him of a number of deputies. This is merely the beginning of what is going to be an intensification of the internal conflict within the ranks of the antipopular forces.

We can say that by the end of this year or at the beginning of next year, the dynamics of the people's struggle will become more extensive. This, of course, is known to the forces within the regime, and whenever they have spoken about the [Salvadoran Government military maneuver] Fire Plan [Plan Fuego] and other such topics, they have in effect been saying that they are fully aware that the radicalization of the popular struggle is unstoppable, that they are unable to stop the forward thrust of the popular movement, that the counterinsurgency plan is in a crisis, and that the popular struggle is moving ahead. That is what is going to happen in the coming months. Therefore, they will be months of great victories for the popular forces.

Venceremos Interviews FDR President Ungo

PA272125 (Clandestine) Radio Venceremos in Spanish to El Salvador 0000 GMT 26 Mar 88

[Interview with FDR President Dr Guillermo Manuel Ungo in Washington, D.C., by an unidentified reporter; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] Dr Ungo, as soon as President Jose Napoleon Duarte learned about the election results, he began speaking about a national dialogue [words indistinct]. We all know how Duarte has refused to listen to any possibility of a national dialogue. Could you explain the reason for this change in Duarte's speech?

[Ungo] It is the first [words indistinct] from that statement by President Duarte. I am not surprised, but I would have to learn a little more about his position, a position that does not surprise me, because everyone is aware that the Salvadoran Christian Democracy suffered a crushing electoral defeat, which shows the current government's weak popular support and its situation of isolation and weakness. Therefore, knowing the desires of the majority of the Salvadoran people to achieve peace through dialogue and negotiation...[changes thought] I believe he is trying to recover a certain degree of support by adopting that position. Now we must wait and demand that he explains what he means by a national dialogue.

He has always accused us of seeking a tactical dialogue. He has always tried to use the dialogues as he did in the Sesori talks, which became a circus. He has also tried to seek favorable conditions for himself, and whenever he fails—because we have the people's support—he then gets mad and suspends the dialogue indefinitely. I feel he is looking for a way out of his isolation.

[Reporter] Dr Ungo, now that you are in the United States, how do you feel the defeat of the Christian Democratic Party in the elections has affected the Reagan administration and other political forces in the United States?

[Ungo] In spite of the fact that the Christian Democratic Party's defeat was expected, [words indistinct] and in political and academic circles as well as in the Democratic Party, there was much surprise and confusion, because this shows the failure of Reagan administration policies. Through their taxes, the U.S. people have financed a war in El Salvador, which has produced results that are the opposite of what they thought would happen. That is, the victory of ARENA [National Republican Alliance] shows that over $3 billion have been spent in a so-called democratic process.

I would say this once again makes the Salvadoran issue a point of interest and concern, and it is causing Reagan administration policies to be revised.

In meetings I have held with people who advise congressmen and even Democratic Party candidates [words indistinct] we have reached the conclusion that this policy has failed.

[Reporter] Dr Ungo, would you like to send a message to our people now that the elections are over?

[Ungo] I would like to take this opportunity to address myself to the Salvadoran people after the elections. I believe it is clear that a large majority of the Salvadoran people understood the elections offered no positive solution to the basic problems of the country. The elections were used as a political strategy against the insurgency. There were no political parties in the elections that represented the people's interest. More than 1.5 million Salvadoran citizens did not go to the polls, and I believe this presents a new situation in which we will have greater presence, greater [words indistinct] people creating the necessary political conditions for a national consensus that can help us find a negotiated political solution with democracy.

I make a call to all so, after this stage, we understand that the Reagan administration policies have suffered a crushing defeat; the policy has been a failure. Therefore, this should encourage us and should give us a greater spirit to continue on in this political struggle so we may find a national solution.

Coprefa Reports on Rebel Attacks, Casualties

PA251858 San Salvador Canal Doce Television in Spanish 0300 GMT 25 Mar 88

[Text] The latest military actions have resulted in two dead and seven wounded, and the destruction of three state-owned vehicles. According to the Coprefa, the rebels yesterday set fire to three CEL [Lempa River Hydroelectric Executive Commission] vehicles near the village of La Marina, Usulutan Department, but no casualties occurred.

The military report also indicates that a guerrilla fighter died and three were wounded during a clash with members of the 4th Military Detachment at the town of El Portillo, Morazan Department.

Furthermore, the Armed Forces reported that another rebel died during a clash with the Army near Poloros, La Union Department.

Nicaragua

D. Ortega Interviewed on Sapoa, U.S. Troops

FL281800 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1700 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Interview with President Daniel Ortega by Radio Rebelde's Daniel Torres in Managua; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Torres] In these past few days in Nicaragua, we have witnessed a process that I would describe as historic in the Nicaraguan context. We would like you to tell Radio Rebelde listeners of your views about this historic moment.

[Ortega] Well, this has been the first big step in our efforts for an effective and total peace, inasmuch as peace is not yet a reality. Rather, we have signed an agreement to achieve peace. This accord was signed without benefit of the U.S. Government. This is a result of the defeats that the mercenary forces have been suffering, their isolation on the international arena, and also the revolution's flexibility in giving them a political space on which to stand here in Nicaragua once they lay down their arms peacefully.

That is what's at stake at this time. There is the implementation of these accords. We are certain that the United States is going to do all that is possible to prevent the implementation of these accords, to sabotage them, to continue the war, and to leave a war policy as its legacy to the next U.S. Administration.

However, this is a challenge both for the [word indistinct] of Nicaragua and those Nicaraguans involved in armed, counterrevolutionary activities, because they have the opportunity to accept an honorable way out or else risk total military defeat. That would be the result if the accords signed on 23 March in Sapoa are not implemented.

[Torres] Mr President, Honduran Foreign Ministry sources assert that the U.S. troops on the border are withdrawing tomorrow. Do you see this as a positive political move by the U.S. Government?

[Ortega] Well, it's not so much a move by the U.S. Government, because it wanted to have the troops in place longer. It is the American people who have been the factor here. They have forced the administration to withdraw those troops from Honduras. As soon as the United States sent the troops to Honduras, the American people staged demonstrations in several American cities repudiating the action. The specter of Vietnam quickly arose in the United States. That's what forced the administration to at least promise to withdraw the troops. As long as we don't see the troops leave, we have to remain vigilant here to this threat posed by the stationing of U.S. troops [words indistinct].

[Torres] Comrade President, should a definitive agreement on a cease-fire starting 6 April be signed, would the country enter a stage of ideological-political confrontation? How do you see this?

[Ortega] I believe that in the years past the Nicaraguan people have made progress ideologically and politically to such an extent that we are not afraid of this kind of confrontation. We are sure that speeches by the right, the reactionaries, won't win over the Nicaraguan people who are firmly defending the interests of the revolution.

[Torres] Comrade Commander, the Cuban people have closely followed the events of recent days. Would you like to send any message to the people of Cuba?

[Ortega] Our greetings to the people of Cuba who also participate in this effort to defend the Nicaraguan revolution, inasmuch as Cuba has stood beside the Nicaraguan people throughout all this struggle, all this battle. Cuba has given all its support to the people of Nicaragua and if we achieve peace it will also be a victory of the Cuban people.

[Torres] Our thanks to the constitutional president of Nicaragua for his statements to Havana's Radio Rebelde.

Technical Commissions To Hold Further Talks

PA281658 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 1517 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Good morning, listeners. We are here in Sapoa, awaiting the meeting that will take place at approximately 1400 to 1500 hours between the technical commissions of the revolutionary government and the counterrevolution.

It was announced last night that two men called Aureliano [name indistinct] and Renato are part of the counterrevolutionary group. Dr Roberto Ferrey, secretary of the contra leadership, will act as liaison official.

The revolutionary government's official delegation is headed by Major General Joaquin Cuadra Lacayo, vice minister of defense and EPS chief of staff. The other members are Vice Foreign Minister Dr Victor Hugo Tinoco; Major Ricardo Wheelock Roman, EPS intelligence chief, and two advisers.

The reasons for the schedule change are unknown. It is very important to point out, however, that everything is ready for this significant meeting that will start today at approximately 1400 or 1500 hours here at the border town of Sapoa.

In addition, the revolutionaray government, through its Interior Ministry, will guarantee the safety of both delegations.

There will be some difficult points to resolve today because there are differences of opinion as to where the counterrevolutionaries who will lay down arms should be lodged. Counterrevolutionary radio stations are affirming that the contras ought to make bigger demands. According to counterrevolutionary stations transmitting from Costa Rica and Honduras, such demands will be made but we do not know whether these demands will be considered in the agreements.

Talks 'Very Positive'

PA290422 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 0329 GMT 29 Mar 88

[Report by Mario Antonio Zelaya from Sapoa]

[Excerpt] The delegation of the revolutionary government met today with the delegation of the counterrevolutionaries. The talks were held in a good atmosphere. It was said that the counterrevolutionaries apparently do not want to advance too quickly. However, there are great expectations, and the talks today were very positive, according to our source.

The counterrevolutionaries' delegation was led this time by Aristides Sanchez and composed of Roberto Urroz; Roberto Ferrey; Walter Saul Calderon, alias Tono; Diogenes Hernandez Membreno, alias Fernando; Arturo Salazar Barberena, alias Omar; (Osorno Coleman), alias Blas; Luis Alfonso Moreno, alias (Mailima); Manuel Adan Rugama Acevedo, alias Aureliano; Dr Alejandro Montiel; Rene Herrera; Bosco Matamoros; Rosario Vega, who acted as secretary; Aquiles Miranda, alias Pedro Rafaga; and (Luis Alan Gonzalez), alias Johnson.

The most interesting aspect was that during the meeting, a member of the contra leadership—Fernando; that is, Diogenes Hernandez Membreno—tried to give a lesson on democracy by pointing out Costa Rica as an example. The journalists pointed out to him that there were Somozist guards in Costa Rica. The contras avoided answering the questions, and even avoided answering why Enrique Bermudez—the colonel of the Somozist guards—and the chieftains Adolfo Calero and Alfredo Cesar met in Washington with George Shultz.

They proposed the talks resume tomorrow at 0900 and conclude at 1700. They said they do not have much time, as they are apparently having logistics problems. [passage omitted]

Ambassador in Budapest Discusses Cease-Fire

LD252122 Budapest MTI in English 1948 GMT 25 Mar 88

[Text] Budapest, March 25 (MTI)—The cease-fire might create peace in Nicaragua, but the revision of the American approach is indispensable. The agreement which was signed on March 23 is greeted by Washington but the first official American reactions suggest that the Reagan administration continues the efforts to topple the Sandinista revolutionary power and to this end the continuation of the war is considered to be the only useful mean—told Lizandro Chavez Alfaro, Nicaraguan ambassador to Budapest, at his press conference on Friday.

Since its start, the Sandinista revolution has strived at the implementation of three principles, namely political pluralism, establishment of a mixed economy and nonaligned foreign policy. The aim of the temporary ceasefire with the armed contra-revolutionaries is exactly this one, that the Sandinista leadership be not forced to give up any of these. The government accepts such conditions—such as the free return of the toppled Somoza dictatorship's major malefactors who are permitted to join the political life—which might provoke disgust on behalf of the majority of the population.

For Nicaragua the most important thing is to put an end to the fighting. Its economy is in crisis. The major cause of this fact is the war, which already caused a 3.8 billion dollars loss to the country. It the fighting were continued the economic austerity measures which were recently taken by the government in order to alleviate the most serious problems would turn out to be useless—said the ambassador.

The Sandinista government wants to comply with each obligations of the temporary ceasefire which was signed for a 60 day period and wishes to make the armistice final. To this end, however, it is needed that the U.S. government observes the agreement. The contra rebels agreed that only humanitarian aid through neutral agencies would be supplied to them during the next two months. If the U.S. legislation approves the request of president Reagan for another 46 million dollars of aid to the contra rebels and they accept it then this would be considered as an open violation of the recently signed agreement—emphasized the ambassador of Nicaragua.

Panama

Noriega Rejects Spanish-Costa Rican Proposal

PA290123 Hamburg DPA in Spanish 0056 GMT 29 Mar 88

[Text] Panama City, 28 Mar (DPA)—Tonight General Manuel Antonio Noriega, commander in chief of the Panama Defense Forces [FDP], reacted to the meeting held in Costa Rica between Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez, Costa Rican President Oscar Arias, and

former Presidents Carlos Andres Perez of Venezuela and Daniel Oduber of Costa Rica. The four met at a remote beach in Costa Rica to study the Panamanian situation and concluded Noriega must leave his post to allow a solution to the Panamanian crisis.

Noriega told DPA tonight that "I do not agree with what they (the four) have proposed." Regarding former President Perez' trip to Panama to seek the mediation of Archbishop Marcos McGrath, Gen Noriega said, "Carlos Andres Perez is trying to help his own political campaign in Venezuela." Noriega said "I do not agree with Perez' work."

For his part, Panamanian President Manuel Solis Palma said he spoke on the telephone this afternoon with Perez, who "informed me of what was resolved in Costa Rica." Solis Palma did not elaborate about the offer and said "we will study the matter."

'Conference of Solidarity' Held in Panama City

Solis Opens Meeting

PA281733 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1543 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Speech by Manuel Solis Palma, minister in charge of the Presidency, to open the "Conference of Solidarity With Panama" at the Atlapa Convention Center in Panama City—live]

[Text] Dr Romulo Escobar Bethancourt, president of the Democratic Revolutionary Party; Mr Luis Gaspar Suarez Sierra, president of the Revolutionary Panamenist Party [applause]; Rear Admiral Manuel Ramon Montes Arrache, fighter of the April 1965 revolution [applause] and national hero of the defense of the Dominican Republic [prolonged applause], national hero of the defense of the Dominican Republic during the U.S. invasion of 1965; Mr Royce Douglas, president of the Labour Party of Dominica [applause]; Mr Ricardo Hurtado, president of the Movement of the Martyrs of 9 January 1964 [prolonged applause]; [shouts of "Viva Omar," applause; Solis Palma responds:" Viva"]; Messrs ministers of state; Honorable legislators; Mrs Yolanda Pulice Rodriguez, president of the Electoral Tribunal; Honorable diplomatic corps accredited in Panama; Mrs Jilma Noriega Jurado, mayor of the District of Panama; Messrs directors of decentralized organizations; Messrs members of the National Executive Committee of the political parties accredited with the Electoral Tribunal; Messrs delegates to the first Central American and Caribbean meeting of solidarity with Panama; special guests; ladies and gentlemen:

I am greeting all delegates to the first Central American and Caribbean meeting of solidarity with Panama with deep emotion. This is a historic occasion, not only for Panama, but for all of Latin America and the Caribbean. This is an opportunity to tell the world that people have awakened, that imperialism in the form of economic aggression shall not pass. [shouts of "It shall not pass"; applause]

I hope this first Central American and Caribbean meeting of solidarity with Panama will provide details as to the situation of economic aggression, of total aggression that has been carried out in the most brutal and barefaced manner against a country that is small, but united in its heart and by the force of right. I hope that in this meeting, the visiting delegations will become familiar with the characteristics of this kind of experience. In this initial greeting, this speech to inaugurate this conference, I have to mention, even if only briefly, two basic aspects of this underhanded attack on our Republic, which is also an attack on all the small, poor, and humble peoples of the world.

I believe the indisputable origin of this aggression lies in the U.S. interests in Panama. It is not the desire to attack one man; the Panamanian problem is not made up of one man.

It is instead the U.S. interest in Panamanian territory; it is the change in military strategy; it is their need to again have Panamanian bases to attack the entire continent and thus be able to maintain military hegemony over the world; it is their interest in serving the huge U.S. economic interests, and in this struggle they have found among a few Panamanians, among some bad Panamanians, the aid and the bases to continue attacking us.

Why do these Panamanians, these sectors in Panama agree to participate in this shameful way toward the fatherland? Where did the problem start? We will state it beyond any personal views we could have had. We will state it based on a historical analysis. It began when the Panamanian oligarchy lost its political power, when a movement toward the relief of the needy classes, of the underprivileged began, when Panamanian peasants began to progress, when the natural leaders displaced tyrants and caciques of past times.

However, ups and downs in history lead to a [U.S.] alliance with the Panamanian oligarchic sectors, and from then on the conspiracy began from inside. The huge contradictions began when, through an oligarch in power, they felt they were close to enjoying the power to further increase their fortune. It is at this time the FDP [Panama Defense Forces] and Manuel Antonio Noriega became an obstacle which had to be removed. [applause]

Then, they made the mistake of closing off all avenues to us in order to bring us to the abyss, and, once we were at the abyss, to demand that we surrender to the United States, something neither the Panamanian people nor national decency would permit. The basis for the attack by the Panamanians, or rather evil Panamanians, against their own country lies in the continuous game of recovering the power they lost, the power for which they long

and which they will never recover again. This is the game we must stop, not because those Panamanians will be able to maintain and spread their betrayal of the fatherland to other countries, but rather because the United States—with its long arm, as Bush said—can indeed spread it to other countries in the world. The solidarity of all peoples lies here, in the defense of our struggle, because here we are waging not Panama's battle, but the battle of dignified men and the battle of humble and dignified countries. This is the battle we will wage. [applause]

I am sure that here we will adopt the final decisions or the initial steps to at least begin halting this degrading aggression. The faith and hope in your work and the strength of our government's spirit will be united in this defense of the American, of the Ibero-American continent, of Third World men. This is the first step to achieving the reinstatement of Torrijism on the international level, as I have said. We are acting within Torrijism, and we will continue following it. [applause]

This is a reality, and I will continue to make our internal actions a reality. I will struggle to dignify the humble man, the poor man's standard of living. There will be no further insults against Panama's poverty. Panama's poverty will no longer be used to mock the Panamanians. I will permanently stretch my hand out to the poor, and even though I feel I must respect all of the people who comprise Panamanian society, my inclination—let it be clear—is toward the struggle of the poor, the humble people of Panama. [applause].

It is toward them that my steps will turn, and anyone who wants to live in this territory must cooperate with this policy or wait and see what his fate will be in the future Republic. [applause].

I care nothing about characterizations. I have made a solemn promise to the Panamanian people and I will keep that promise. I must ask the visiting delegations for their support in proclaiming Panama's truth, and for each country to create a committee of support for the Panamanian people and government in their nationalist struggle. [applause].

Of the Caribbean people we ask that they help us achieve the solidarity of the West Indian people who live in our country, by adequately informing them and removing from them the misinformation they receive from the United States. I hope this conference constitutes a real step toward integrating the West Indian Caribbean with the rest of Latin America, because the unity of all America will lead us to victory over the permanent injustice our peoples have suffered.

With these words I would like to declare open this conference, which will result in great benefits for humanity.

Thank you very much. [applause].

Luis Gaspar Suarez Address

PA282017 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1600 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Speech by Luis Gaspar Suarez Sierra, president of the Revolutionary Panamenist Party, at the "Conference of Solidarity With Panama" at the Atlapa Convention Center in Panama City—live]

[Text] Mr President of the Republic Manuel Solis Palma; Mr General of dignity Manuel Antonio Noriega, who is listening to us patriotically [applause]; comrade delegates of the Caribbean and Latin America, including Chiquita, the widow of Francisco Caamano Deno, that martyr of America and the world [prolonged applause; shouts of "Viva the Dominican Republic"]; Comrade Kendrick Radix, friend and minister of another American martyr, Maurice Bishop of Grenada; distinguished guests; all friends present; television and radio listeners:

Allow me to invoke the memory of Marcus Garvey, the glorious defender of blacks, whom we honor here at this august assembly. [applause] I must also recall the other leader and friend of the poor, the neglected, and the Indians, the creator of a new concept of the Indo-American military. I am referring to General Omar Torrijos Herrera [prolonged, rhythmic applause; slogans]. We also dedicate this meeting to him, inspired by his struggles for liberation.

During the Reagan administration there has been a new trend in the course of U.S. international relations. While trying by all means to reach agreements with the USSR and making every effort to not involve its Marines in low-intensity conflicts in the Middle East and other parts of the world, the United States has on the other hand applied all its brutality and arrogance to states small in size and material power. This was the case in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and in Grenada in 1983.

Now, all the economic might of the largest capitalist power in the world is trying to destroy our people, who are struggling to maintain their independence and sovereignty.

The United States is in such a crisis of contradiction of its alleged democratic postulates that it only barks when its opponent appears to be or is weak.

In Panama's case, historical experience has shown that even when the United States takes on small countries in an attempt to diminish their sovereignty, if the peoples involved organize politically, economically, morally, and, above all, militarily, the United States thinks twice or three times before sending its Marines. The Vietnam syndrome has left a permanent mark on this new trend in international relations; above all, it has demonstrated U.S. vulnerability when the very survival of a people is at stake.

That is Panama today. It is united in a single nationalistic fist to defeat aggression of all kinds, including military aggression, which has the immediate goal of putting power into the hands of oligarchic and turncoat groups: groups that are the enemies of the Nonaligned Movement; opportunistic groups that do not represent the humble people, because those people are scorned economically, politically, and racially by these servile antipatriots—born imitators of the Ku Klux Klan.

What is the origin of Panama's conflict? Distinguished delegates, the Republic of Panama, with 2 million inhabitants, has been experiencing a revolutionary political, economic, and military process. From 1903 to 1968 the State Department imposed its dictates, outstanding among which was that to be president of the Republic of Panama it would be necessary to have the blessings of the United States.

From 1968, when the revolutionary process effectively displaced oligarchic, anarchic, and total misgovernment with a small army in the early stages of its technical development, a phase of nationalist recovery began. It was stated that the treaty that imposed perpetual U.S. control over our main natural resource should end, and that on 31 December 1999 at 1200, Panama time, the very last soldier must be evacuated from the military bases operating here. [applause]

The United States signed that pact in 1977. It was Commander Omar Torrijos Herrera's greatest moment. The U.S. president at the time—President Carter—had the honor of correcting the terrible historical error his country made.

As you know, fellow delegates, at the end of Carter's administration and the beginning of Reagan's government, the United States established the firm determination to change the spirit and letter of the Torrijos-Carter Treaty. It was no secret that the decolonization of the former Canal Zone—which consisted of the imposition of a foreign police state within the Panamanian state, with the arbitrary existence of courts, policemen, flag, language, and foreign trade—would end with the Torrijos-Carter treaty. The Yankee military presence in Panama now falls within the context of in-depth changes in the Caribbean and Central American region.

Cuba's firm presence in the area [applause]; the thwarted Grenadian revolutionary movement [applause]; the emergence of heroic Sandinist Nicaragua [applause]; the liberation processes in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Colombia [applause]; the increasingly powerful Green Revolution led by brother Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, who enjoys our affection [applause] and whom we greet today on the 18th anniversary of the decisive expulsion of military troops and bases from Libyan territory [applause]; the old colonial empires' inability to prevent new nations in the Lesser Antilles; the final fall of Baby Doc Duvalier's opprobrious dictatorship; and the wave of democratization in Peru, Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, among others, are the most dynamic components that deepen the U.S. neocolonialist crisis.

Panamanians understand perfectly well what the U.S. problem is, and they understand its hegemonic and reactionary policy in this part of the world. The Reaganite model headed by international terrorists, Senators Helms and Kerry, was implemented with the immediate objective of paralyzing the Caribbean and Central American nations' effort to achieve democratic and progressive development.

It is precisely at this moment when the figure of the general of dignity, Commander Manuel Antonio Noriega, appeared, [words indistinct] of the ramparts. [applause] Totally identified with Torrijos' thought, this dignified military man, a constitutionalist, proud of his Panamanian nationality, aware of his historical role in the Latin American struggle, knows that he must continue uniting the Armed Forces and the people.

Noriega, contrary to the lies disseminated to the world by gringo disinformation, has respected the democratic and constitutional process that is based on Panamanian reality. He has said that elections will be held within that framework, with every guarantee, and with international observers. He has also said that the military corps will respect the results of those elections. [scattered applause]

Our glorious Defense Forces, under Noriega's leadership, have been properly trained and are highly prepared to take over the defense and protection of the Panama Canal at the proper time. We consider this armed corps for the maintenance of peace, which has very few resource and which is small in proportion to our population, to be among the best in the world, because of the efficient and humanitarian way in which it has faced up to the worst seditious campaign in our fatherland's history. It has fought the conspiracy day after day for 9 months, with great professionalism and a great sense of duty, without giving Elliott Abrams and his clique of local lackeys the opportunity they are desperately seeking—to claim that there has been even a single death. [applause]

From the moment Reagan realized he did not have Gen Noriega's support for his plans to punish Nicaragua, increasingly sustained attacks began against the people's commander. U.S. history has no precedent for the hatred concentrated against a Third World leader that Reagan has directed against Gen Manuel Antonio Noriega. The attack ranges from lies, slander, and insults to physical and terrorist assault.

What do the Panamanian people want? [slogans] The Reagan government is trying by every means to divide the Panamanian people through disinformation and by discrediting their leaders. In a million-dollar campaign, it has bought mercenaries and traitors to install a puppet

government here to destroy all vestiges of Torrijism and negotiate a new agreement that will permit the United States to remain in Panama for eternity.

The Panamanian people, who have endured a cavalry lasting many years in their relations with the United States, are tired of living on the crumbs the Yankees throw them. After profiting from our canal for more than 7 decades, it has now imposed on us a criminal financial blockade and has frozen money that belongs to us to force the people to surrender to hunger.

This time the gringos have gone further than they ever have in their many acts of economic aggression against Panama over the decades. I cannot remember any other act of aggression against a people that has been as brutal and merciless as this one. The Reagan government is intentionally trying, through the hunger it is producing among the Panamanian masses, to push those people into the streets in protest against Gen Noriega. However, this has not occurred, and he [Reagan] was mistaken.

In his ferocious parallel campaign both inside and outside Panama, Reagan is trying to convince people that Gen Noriega is the problem in Panama and that if Noriega is removed from his position, everything will immediately be resolved and we will then be able to enjoy a true democracy, supported by a shower of dollars he would send for Panama's development.

With this proposal, President Reagan has reached the highest level of his paranoid position against a small country. Actually, we Panamanians have been demanding for some time that the plans for hunger and misery proposed by the gringos through the World Bank and the IMF be rejected. Those plans have been partially thwarted in Panama thanks to the firm and clear position of the Panamanian people, Gen Noriega, and the active forces of the country, which include the people in uniform.

The Panamanian people clearly understand that Reagan's immediate objective is to block, by any means, the implementation of the decolonization program left to us by General Omar Torrijos Herrera. [applause, slogans] The decolonization plan designed by Gen Torrijos calls for eliminating the fifth border by eliminating the cancer in Panama's heart known as the Canal Zone; for reducing direct economic dependence on the U.S. Government by eliminating or restricting the activities of the Peace Corps and AID; and for developing the country's infrastructure, especially by providing electricity throughout the country, a nationwide road system, an integrated health system, potable water everywhere in the country, a national and international telephone system, and so on.

The other aspect of the U.S. conflict against our country is the indisputable fact that the Panama Defense Forces are not submissive. Torrijos—and this is another of his great acts—designed an Armed Forces that would be loyal to national and popular sovereignty and friendly toward all nations committed to the sacred principle of mutual respect.

Gen Torrijos showed us we could coexist peacefully with the United States, as long as the United States adhered to the provisions of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties and, above all, as long as it respected other people's self-determination.

The FDP has been subjected to treacherous attacks, some covert and others overt, from the U.S. Southern Command, an extension of U.S. military strategy. From being a force to guarantee the Panama Canal's security and defense, the U.S. Southern Command has become an army of intervention and occupation on the banks of the canal and a sword of Damocles hanging over all the Latin American peoples.

The fact that Panamanian soldiers are taking on more of the responsibility for the canal's defense and security and that, beginning on 1 January 2000, security and defense will be carried out exclusively by Panamanians is a very important contribution to peace in this part of the world. All of the foregoing gives us a clear picture of why this Yankee aggression has been launched against Panama.

In summary, the Reagan administration's problem is that today Panama is experiencing a process of growing national liberation in which the Panamanian military is not willing to sell our sovereignty. The Yankees have not been able to buy Gen Noriega, and today, more than ever, we are on the path of decolonizing our country. But there is more. In Panama today, the politicians of the pro-imperialist, oligarchic parties have failed in their attempt to control the popular masses. The Panamanian people are more inclined to let all of society resolve the problems of work and peace. But this cannot be offered by these seditious groups, alienated from political power and allied unconditionally with the IMF and the World Bank. And we ask, if Noriega falls, what will happen?

The Reagan administration has stated clearly that it will not end the economic embargo against the Panamanian people until Noriega leaves the FDP. [crowd shouts: "He will not leave"] [Words indistinct] of the imperialists to subdue the FDP and to force Noriega's ouster. But I ask the following: What right does the United States have to impose a public official on us? What gives Reagan the right to tell a people what to do? Panamanians want to be completely free, and we are finally in a search for our historic destiny. Let us coldly analyze what Noriega's departure would mean. First, it would mean the Reagan administration would be gaining points in so-called U.S. prestige in the region, with an eye to the electoral campaign that has begun in the United States. It would

be a clear warning to all the progressive military personnel in Latin America and the Caribbean. It would mean the beginning of repression of all the military officials in the area who are calling for a strengthening of national and popular sovereignty.

But here in Panama, Gen Noriega's ouster would mean the beginning of a civil war. But more than a civil war, it would mean a war between the Panamanian people and the Yankee soldiers.

The Reagan administration is responsible for the crisis we are suffering, and it does not want to understand that the FDP represents the defense of national sovereignty and the defense of the people's sovereignty. Since 1972, the Panamanian people have set out on their own democratic course, having adopted the path of the people's power, which imperialism has now tried to destroy. In other words, our sovereignty cannot be detached from the sovereignty exercised by the people with their inalienable rights to political, economic, and social participation.

Gen Manuel Antonio Noriega represents the dual function of defending national sovereignty and the people's sovereignty. As a nationalist, patriotic, and profoundly Torrijist soldier, Gen Noriega represents the progressive, popular solution to the crisis begun by the United States. The Reagan administration, devoid of credibility among the Panamanian people, has no way out but to exercise all its power against little Panama. The oligarchic groups friendly to the Reagan administration do not carry any weight in Panamanian society. We must therefore clearly understand that deep down the United States does not only want Gen Noriega's ouster. This would be the first counterrevolutionary step to destroy the Panamanian people's defenses. But the Reagan administration wants to provoke Gen Noriega's ouster so it can immediately begin to hunt down the nationalist, progressive officers and soldiers who comprise the immense majority of the FDP. This fascist hunt, with the logistical support of the U.S. Southern Command occupation army, would simultaneously be the prelude to the traitorous sellout of a false government created inside a Yankee military base. This false government would allow U.S. intervention throughout the country in an effort to immediately silence the peoples' voices of protest. With this scheme, gentlemen, the Yankees hope to portray themselves to the world as the Panamanian people's heroes. As can be seen, the clear intervention of the Reagan administration in Panama's domestic affairs is nothing superficial. Although it is true Gen Noriega would be a war trophy for them, the Reagan plan does not end there. They would attempt with fire and blood to control the FDP military units that refused to surrender to the Southern Command. The Panamanian people also would resist the occupation by the Yankees and the Panamanian contras. If for any reason the Yankees were to get away with their sinister plan, Gen Noriega would occupy not only the FDP headquarters but also the command post of the people's forces that together would form a government to defend the fatherland. [applause]

The Reagan administration is becoming more and more desperate. One week ago, it invented all kinds of lies against Gen Noriega. They thought their lies against Noriega would be believed by international public opinion. But that did not happen, and all of their attacks on Noriega became a terrible boomerang. The Reagan administration seems to be staffed by fugitives from an insane asylum. Poindexter demonstrated great mental weakness, and Oliver North has been indicted for his harebrained plan. The international community should realize the Reagan administration is under the control of individuals whose minds and fingers want to press the computer buttons for a nuclear war. But since they cannot do so, fearful of their counterpart's missiles, they lash out against countries small in territory but gigantic in defense of their dignity.

The alternative is clear. Neither Gen Noriega nor his nationalist, patriotic stance are negotiable. He is the Panamanian people's legitimate leader. Speaking from this podium on behalf of the popular majority, [applause] we tell Gen Noriega that at a time such as the one we are living through, his personality acquires a special importance and stature. We are at the threshold of achieving a triumph that will not only be for the Panamanian people. It will be a triumph for the Caribbean people, for the Central American people, for the Indian-American people, and for all the small countries that dare face up to voracious imperialism. Gen Noriega is aware of his role at this historic point. It is not a case of personalities or of enlightened people here or there, it is not a passing or momentary struggle, but rather the aspiration of the peoples who, like ours, want a change, a radical change, a change that will place us among the world's free countries. Thank you very much.

Major Delgado Speech

PA290337 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1706 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Speech by Major Daniel Delgado, director of the Executive Directorate for Treaty Affairs, at the "Conference of Solidarity With Panama" at the Atlapa Convention Center in Panama City—live]

[Text] Good morning and welcome, delegates to the first Conference of Central American and Caribbean Solidarity With Panama. Fraternal greetings from the people in uniform, the Panama Defense Forces.

Panama and the Panamanian people are now being subjected to violent aggression from the world's most powerful nation, the United States. This political, economic, and military aggression is being suffered by all the Panamanian people. To understand the motives behind this aggression, it is important to look back at the history of Panama's relations with the United States.

Historically, these relations have concerned our greatest natural resource: Panama's geographic position. That narrow corridor in the Central American isthmus joins two oceans through a narrow strip measuring a mere 50 miles. Historically, this geographic position has been a crossroads for the migratory currents of America and the world.

This geographic position—our greatest wealth and natural resource—favored the signing of the Panama Canal Treaty in 1903; a treaty no Panamanian signed and allowed the United States to open the interoceanic Panama Canal. From that date on Panamanians have been struggling to recover their sovereignty, usurped in the 1903 treaty. Panamanians have seen their territory used to establish U.S. military bases ever since that date. These bases have not only been established as part of U.S. hemispheric strategy, but, throughout our history, they have usually been used for aggression and as occupation forces in our territory.

It was not until 1964, after several interventions in our country, after the events of January of that year, and after the international community became aware of the situation, that the United States acknowledged that Panama's patience was reaching its limit and that Latin American nations saw Panama's situation as an insult to the dignity of free Latin American nations. Consequently, Latin America supported Panama's position and its struggle to completely recover its territorial sovereignty and to achieve the return of the Panama Canal to its legitimate owners: the Panamanians. In his travels around the world, General Omar Torrijos Herrera sought the solidarity of the international community, and particularly Latin America, so we could totally recover our national resource, the Panama Canal.

The Torrijos-Carter Treaties were signed in 1977 under the auspices of the international communities' support. At the time, the United States seemed to have done justice to our country's liberty and decolonization. At that same moment, however, well-known conservatives in the U.S. Government began to say that an error had been made when those treaties were signed and approved and that the United States had to do whatever was necessary to return to the previous status quo. It is important to know U.S. geopolitical, strategic, and military policy at the time and the U.S. position in 1988 so we can understand why Panama is now being attacked politically, economically, and militarily.

The geopolitical situation on the continent, especially in the Central American region, was one of stability and peace in 1977. Despite problems in a few Central American countries, there was calm, peace, and progress in the region. Today, in 1988, the Central American region has become a volcano; it has become an area of conflict. Central Americans are struggling for their complete liberation. They are fighting to be able to decide their own destiny, but U.S. military policy has been never been so involved in this region as at present, and all peace proposals for Central America are being sabotaged by the U.S. policy of interference.

In 1977, when the Torrijos-Carter Treaties were signed, there was no conflict in the Middle East. The Camp David peace talks were in progress in 1977. Today, in 1988, the Iran-Iraq conflict and the war situation in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, which endangers the world's energy reserves in that area, have increased the importance of our continent and its energy reserves to U.S. policy. Today more than ever, our continent's energy resources have a strategic value for the United States. Never before have the energy reserves on our continent—in Ecuador, Venezuela, Peru, and other countries—been so threatened as they are within the scope of U.S. influence in the region.

In 1977 there was also the Vietnam syndrome. The U.S. people rejected any type of military action anywhere in the world. The U.S. Government felt the U.S. people and its soldiers should not be used in another conflict of that magnitude because of the U.S. people's rejection.

Today, in 1988, in the United States there is what we call the Rambo syndrome. The U.S. Administration's aggressive policies compromise the lives of U.S. soldiers in the so-called low-intensity conflicts that have taken place in countries like the Dominican Republic and Grenada, whose representatives are here today. Moreover, in 1977 there was what is known as the policy of mutually assured destruction in the U.S.-Soviet confrontation. The world's nuclear arsenal guaranteed the two superpowers would not start a large-scale conflict.

Today, in 1988, following the agreements signed in Washington in December, there is a nuclear detente with the elimination of some nuclear weapons—short- and medium-range missiles—from Europe. Another summit has been scheduled for October, which could very well result in the elimination of nuclear weapons in the world.

Also pending is the strategic defense initiative or Star Wars program, which would neutralize nuclear weapons. There is also the zero option, proposed by the USSR, which calls for the destruction of all nuclear weapons.

In other words, we are currently facing a nuclear detente. This makes conventional forces more important. Countries having such forces distributed throughout the world have a strategic advantage over their adversaries. In other words, in the U.S.-Soviet confrontation the country having the best distribution of conventional forces around the world will have a relative advantage over its adversary.

That is precisely the problem we are facing here in Panama. The largest U.S. conventional military installations in this hemisphere are located in Panama. Although in 1977 the United States was willing to eliminate those bases in the year 2000, today in 1988 the

United States is reluctant to let the last U.S. soldier leave our territory on 31 December 1999, when those military bases will be turned over to the Panamanian people. [applause]

That is where the real cause of this aggression lies.

This is our interpretation of U.S. interests and objectives with regard to Panama. Those objectives are what the United States is trying to maintain. And, since the Panamanian people, the Panamanian Government, and General Manuel Antonio Noriega have said no, precisely for that reason Gen Noriega and the Panamanian Government and people are being subjected to the U.S. Government's most serious aggression.

What do they need to achieve these objectives? Why are we subjected to aggression today? Precisely because, for the United States to comply with the treaties and for the last U.S. troops to leave our territory on 31 December 1999, the United States needs to have a plan for the dismantling of bases and removal of troops that will require 10 years to carry out. And I am not the one who says that. Studies carried out by the U.S. Defense Department show that the process of dismantling military bases and removing and relocating conventional forces stationed in Panama requires that between now and 1989, at the latest, a final plan must be drafted for the programmed removal of those military bases. It is now that the United States needs to obtain Panama's agreement to remain in this country beyond the year 2000. It is now that the United States seeks permission to remain on Panamanian soil beyond the year 2000 from Panamanians who, betraying out national liberation cause, will make this concession to the United States and allow it to remain on our territory beyond the year 2000.

Much has said about the strategic value of the Panama Canal, and much has been said about the strategic value of those military bases. We can briefly explain the strategic importance of the military bases located in Panama.

There are four main bases, which are the largest between the Mexican border and the Southern Cone. The world's largest communications intelligence center is in Panama in an island none of the negotiators took into consideration when the Torrijos-Carter Treaties were signed, Galeta Island. It is the heart of U.S. electronic intelligence. Howard Air Force Base is the largest air base on the entire continent, and it can be used by all the airplanes the U.S. Air Force has or is developing. The United States does not want to turn over that military base.

Fort Sherman is where the jungle survival school is located. It is where the U.S. soldiers train for low-intensity conflicts. That is where the United States is conducting the military operations and maneuvers that the Panamanian people and government have not authorized: the "Total Warrior" exercises.

Likewise, there is Fort Clayton, where the U.S. infantry forces are located and where the U.S. Southern Command will be located. That is the strategic command for developing U.S. military strategy on the continent, and it will be located in that military base. The Southern Command is in Panama by force; it is in Panama in a de facto manner, because it was not included in the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. It is is the center where operations for all Latin America are planned as part of the U.S. military strategy for this continent.

Central American and Caribbean friends, the Panamanian people are suffering the consequences of this aggression. The Panamanian people's will to confront this aggression is a strong will, however. All political and military leaders on this continent are threatened. What the United States is doing against Panama is only a rehearsal for a new type of aggression. No political or military leader on this continent will be safe if this aggression against Panama is triumphs. No political or military leader on this continent will be able to defend the cause of his own country. No political or military leader on this continent will be free from this type of aggression if Latin American solidarity does not support the Panamanian cause today. If the U.S. aggression against the Panamanian people succeeds today, we will not be free.

All the countries on this continent will be likewise subjected to this type of aggression and this type of policy. Just as the Panamanian people have closed ranks and maintained their willingness to struggle in the face of this aggression, the time is here for Latin America and the world to learn about our reality and about the reasons behind this aggression. It is time to learn that this is not an issue of a single man; it is a matter of a cause, and that man is the symbol of that cause. It is the cause of the Panamanian people. The process of decolonization that began in our territory and that is supported by all Latin America and the entire world will succeed.

Only by maintaining the will of the Panamanian people with international support will we be able to face this type of aggression. None of our countries will be free if the United States succeeds in its aggressive policy toward our country.

Welcome, delegates to this conference of Central American and Caribbean solidarity with Panama. Let the seed of Latin American unity be born here; the seed of a true unity among the peoples of America and of the world to struggle for their greatest interests so that at last we will be free, sovereign, and independent. We will then be able to achieve the dream of Bolivar, the dream of our martyrs, and the dream of our patriots. Thank you.

Solis Palma Praises SELA Meeting in Caracas

PA290002 Caracas Venezolana de Television Canal 8 in Spanish 1600 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Interview with Manuel Solis Palma, minister in charge of the Presidency, by unidentified reporter in Panama City; date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Reporter] What do you think of the SELA meeting that opens on 28 March in Caracas? What do you expect from this meeting?

[Solis] I think that the mere fact the meeting has been convoked is an approval of the Panamanian request, which is clearly defined in the document requesting this meeting. The fact the request was accepted is actually accepting the situation. Furthermore, this is complemented by the statements issued by many countries stating that it is basic that there should not be any foreign interference in Panamanian affairs. They also condemn—and this is part of the SELA regulations and bylaws—any country that engages in economic aggression. This is something the other countries do not accept.

Please observe that this is extending. It began with Panama, and it now includes Mexico, Paraguay, and Bolivia; thus, we are extending it. I believe the Latin American countries are sufficiently aware of their destinies and responsibilities for not falling into the problem of supporting an outrageous and inhumane intervention against a country by exerting economic pressure. This is not just for Panama. I want to issue a warning. This is a method that could be extended—as is already being done—to any Latin American country. This gives us a basic idea for discussion; it is not a discussion of a govenment's legitimacy or illegitimacy; it is a discussion of a country's not having the right to economically crush another country, as is being done.

[Reporter] President Reagan says General Noriega should leave. As president of Panama, what do you think?

[Solis] Reagan can say that, and that is his point of view. However, I think this is a problem to be resolved by Panamanians. Gen Noriega himself has commented on the manner in which he thinks the Panamanian problem should be resolved. The Panamanians also have the right to determine the destiny of each of our men according to the basic functions of the administration. This is not a problem that can be resolved by others.

Opposition Calls for 28 March Demonstration

PA281310 San Jose Radio Impacto in Spanish 1751 GMT 27 Mar 88

[Statement by Legislative Representative Mayin Correa; place, date not given]

[Text] Friendly listeners of Radio Impacto, this is Mayin Correa from Panama. The members of the opposition parties of Panama, the National Civic Crusade [CCN], which groups more than 200 civic, business, student, and professional organizations, and some independent members of the opposition to General Noriega now in exile on 26 March signed a statement declaring the unity that they represent among the Panamanian people. The document which was signed here on 26 March states:

The undersigned of the CCN, the political, democratic parties, and independent sectors again reiterate their unwavering determination, as expressed in the document of 6 March 1988. In this hour of mourning, sorrow, and hunger being tragically experienced by a suffering, abused people at the hands of a narco-military dictatorship, we exhort all citizens to continue the civic, peaceful protest and to participate in the march on Monday, 28 March, at the Don Bosco Church. A united people will manage to evict the narco-military from power and reestablish our democratic institutions, respect for the dignity of all citizens, peace, and tranquillity for a people who want work and food for their children.

This document is signed by Dr Arnulfo Arias Madrid, leader of the Authentic Panamenist Party; Ricardo Arias Calderon, of the Christian Democratic Party; Gilbert Mallol, of the CCN; Milciades Cerrud, representative of the teachers; Gilberto Guardia, Gilberto Arias of the Nationalist Liberal Republican Movement, MOLIRENA; and Roberto Eisenmann, Jose Blandon, Gabriel Lewis Galindo, and Mayin Correa of the independent opposition.

Mayors Reiterate Ban

PA281350 Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish 28 Mar 88 p A-1

[Communique issued by Panama District Mayor Jilma Noriega de Jurado and San Miguelito District Mayor Balbina de Perinan in Panama City on 27 March]

[Text] COMMUNIQUE

We hereby give warning that Cabinet Resolution No 70 of 19 October 1987 banning demonstrations, particularly those aimed at disrupting public order, remains in effect. Therefore, the Panama City and San Miguelito mayors have instructed the competent authorities to enforce the executive branch and Cabinet Council decision adopted through Resolution No 70 of 1987.

Signed by

Panama District Mayor Jilma Noriega de Jurado

San Miguelito Mayor Balbina de Perinan

Police Surround Church

PA281944 Paris AFP in Spanish 1840 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Panama City, 28 Mar (AFP)—At noon today the antiriot police took to the streets in Panama City to prevent disturbances during the demonstration the opposition Civic Crusade has scheduled for this afternoon.

Trucks loaded with policemen were deployed to areas around Don Bosco Church in downtown Panama City. Don Bosco Church will be the gathering point for this afternoon's demonstration scheduled by the opposition.

The Civic Crusade announced that the demonstrators will walk approximately 3 km to the presidential palace, where the speakers will again demand the removal of General Manuel Antonio Noriega.

However, the demonstration scheduled by the opposition seemed to be threatened by civilian progovernment groups that, since early this morning, began a "fast for peace and against U.S. intervention" in front of Don Bosco Church. The duration of the fast for peace and against U.S. intervention was not specified.

The government banned all public demonstrations last August and since then, all the demonstrations scheduled by the opposition have been foiled by the police or have ended in clashes and street disturbances.

Marchers Dispersed

PA282212 Paris AFP in Spanish 2124 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Panama City, 28 Mar (AFP)—The antiriot police dispersed a march of several thousand people who were demonstrating against the current Panamanian regime in the principal city streets this afternoon.

The demonstrators left Don Bosco Church, in the downtown part of the city where they had gathered, and they walked chanting antigovernment slogans. "Doberman" battalions intercepted the march about 2 km later.

The antiriot squads indiscriminately attacked the opposition supporters with tear gas and chemical water, causing great confusion in front of 5 Mayo Plaza.

In another sector of the capital along the Central Avenue, in front of the International Hotel, the demonstrators who had begun the march peacefully were encircled by the soldiers.

In their flight, the opposition demonstrators began to erect barricades on the nearby streets and avenues.

Shortly before, Lieutenant Colonel Virgilio Mirones of the Panama Defense Forces [FDP] General Staff asked the demonstrators to leave the area.

"In this struggle, our only enemy is the United States, which wants to pit us against the people," Mirones said, addressing the opposition demonstrators, who responded that "the one who has to leave is General Noriega," the FDP commander in chief.

The repression of the opposition march occurred while businessmen Guillermo Fernandez, Carlos Valencia, and Alberto Aleman of the National Civic Crusade were at the Attorney General's Office trying to negotiate with Lt Col Mirones to prevent the action from being repressed.

The antigovernment demonstration was to converge at Santa Ana Plaza, near the government palace.

Opposition Leaders Arrested

PA290010 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 2340 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Panama City, 28 Mar (ACAN-EFE)—Military troops in combat gear arrested the principal leaders of the opposition National Civic Crusade today, after a demonstration demanding the ouster of General Manuel Antonio Noriega was dispersed.

Alberto Conte, president of the National Journalists Association and member of the CCN executive committee, told ACAN-EFE that the demonstrators, estimated at more than 5,000, "were ambushed by the military" in a downtown street of this capital, where they then made arrests.

Among those arrested, the number of which was not specified, are Carlos Ernesto Gonzalez De La Lastra, one of the principal CCN leaders; Alberto Aleman, president of the Panama Chamber of Construction; Tomas Herrera; Carlos Anguizola; Roberto Aleman; and members of the Panamanian Association of Business Executives.

No Injuries Reported

PA290303 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 0025 GMT 29 Mar 88

[Text] Despite the reiterated pleas by the highest municipal authorities in Panama City and San Miguelito, hundreds of people heeded the call made by the National Civic Crusade and disobeyed the decree banning demonstrations. This made it necessary for antiriot units of the Defense Forces to disperse them in Central Avenue using tear gas.

The demonstrators gathered at Don Bosco Church, where they talked with Lieutenant Colonel Virgilio Mirones, who urged them to prevent clashes with the troops posted in the surrounding areas by leaving peacefully.

Foreign journalists were seen in the vicinity wearing gas masks.

Shortly after the meeting, Lt Col Mirones talked with four members of the Civic Crusade for approximately 30 minutes and repeatedly insisted on the need for a dialogue, seeking peace in the country, and preventing heightened divisions among Panamanians. This meeting took place at the Attorney General's Office.

Meanwhile, demonstrators marched from Don Bosco Church to near 5 May Plaza, where they were dispersed with tear gas by antiriot police. No one was injured or arrested during the incident, which lasted only a few minutes. The police quickly controlled the situation, and the demonstration was dispersed without any serious problems.

'Agents' Arrest Crusade Leaders, Newsmen

PA2800128 Paris AFP in Spanish 0101 GMT 29 Mar 88

[Text] Panama City, 28 Mar (AFP)—Panamanian state security agents arrested leaders of the National Civic Crusade [CCN] and several foreign press correspondents who were at the Marriot Hotel in this capital, eyewitnesses reported.

Some 10 security agents, accompanied by policemen, suddenly entered the hotel lobby where the CCN was going to hold a news conference and made the arrests.

Among those arrested is CCN President Aurelio Barria and unidentified international journalists.

The Marriott Hotel, located in Punta Paitilla [as received], has become the "general headquarters" of foreign correspondents and location of the opposition's news conferences.

The security agents took the arrested people in several vehicles, warning the hotel guests to stay in their rooms.

More on Arrests, Violence, Strike

PA291406 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1209 GMT 29 Mar 88

[Text] Panama City, 29 Mar (ACAN-EFE)—Panamanian opposition leaders who were arrested on Monday during a raid on a Panama City hotel and during a demonstration against General Manuel Antonio Noriega are still missing.

Today the opposition National Civic Crusade [CCN] remained firm in its decision to continue the 9-day-old indefinite strike despite the arrests.

In the jungle areas of Bocas del Toro, on Panama's Caribbean coast, the transnational "Chiriqui Land Company" workers agreed to continue their indefinite strike, which began 12 days ago.

Opposition sources report that the "Chiriqui Land Company" is one of the biggest taxpayers in Panama, and the strike represents heavy losses for the government.

Today, the 9th day of the strike, the government will announce additional measures to reopen the banks, which were closed on 3 March.

The gradual payment to retirees and government workers and the sale of food bags to government workers is expected to continue today.

Approximately 200 soldiers raided the biggest hotel in Panama City on Monday in an attempt to arrest CCN leaders who called a news conference. Several members of the local and foreign press were also arrested during the attack.

Several correspondents reported that during the raid on the "Caesar Marriott" Hotel, CBS correspondent Ignacio Medrano suffered several fractured ribs as a result of rifle butt blows he received from the soldiers who were arresting him.

The correspondents also reported that NBC crewman Domingo Rex was beaten and suffered a broken nose. Rex was also arrested by the soldiers.

The two correspondents were taken to a Panama City hospital.

Opposition sources said not all the correspondents have been released. Among those correspondents still being held are several Panamanians who work for the U.S. press.

A Spanish television camera crew, Mexican correspondents Eduardo Herrera and Jose Manuel Pintado, and CBS sound technician Alejandro Carbonell were also arrested. It is believed that Herrera was also beaten by the soldiers.

Opposition CCN sources told ACAN-EFE that Luis Guillermo Casco Arias, secretary general of the Nationalist Republican Liberal Movement (MOLIRENA), was arrested in the raid.

In addition, they reported the arrests of Milciades Cerrud, a teachers' leader and member of the CCN; CCN member Olmedo Guillen; and Carlos Abadia of the Dentists' Association.

The source said that approximately 30 CCN members were arrested at the hotel.

The raid began around 1800 (2300 GMT) when the soldiers and policemen, accompanied by members of the intelligence service, surrounded the hotel, closed nearby streets, and burst into the hotel carrying their weapons.

Witnesses reported that two hotel security agents were beaten by the troops when the agents tried to prevent them from entering.

The soldiers also went through and checked hotel rooms, the swimming pool, and the kitchen looking for other opposition leaders. They also seized film and filming equipment found in correspondents' rooms.

Carlos Gonzalez de la Lastra of the CCN; Alberto Aleman, president of the Panamanian Chamber of Construction; Tomas Herrera; Carlos Anguizola; Roberto Aleman; and members of the Panamanian Association of Business Executives were arrested during the demonstration.

Approximately 5,000 people participated in the march. However, they were dispersed with birdshot [perdigones], teargas cocktails, and water mixed with chemicals that itch, which forced people to take their clothes off—including women—in the streets because of the sting caused by this substance.

A Panama Defense Forces spokesman told ACAN-EFE that "apparently no arrests were made," but he stressed that "this is still unofficial."

Ministry Warns Firms Not Resuming Activities

PA282008 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1718 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] A communique issued by the Labor and Social Welfare Ministry reports that the General Labor Directorate, headed by Jose Felix Castillo, today began a nationwide inspection.

This operation is aimed at verifying compliance with the constitutional dispositions and the corresponding laws guaranteeing the uninterrupted operation of private enterprises that engage in public service, as well as the laws guaranteeing the right to work and other regulations that protect salaried workers.

Enterprises that do not abide by this executive decree will be summoned immediately to make appropriate explanations to the labor authorities. If those enterprises do not answer the summons, they are hereby warned of the punishment established in Executive Decree No 16 of 25 March 1988 and the other laws regulating this matter. This punishment includes the suspension or cancellation of their license as well as the preventive seizure of goods to guarantee the people's benefits and rights.

The communique concludes by stating that Candelario Santana, labor and social welfare minister, is appealing to the high sense of responsibility and citizen's awareness of all businessmen so that they will resume activities to avoid greater damage to the community.

PRD Calls for Public Prayer at U.S. Embassy

PA281523 Panama City CRITICA in Spanish 28 Mar 88 pp 1, 11

[Text] The Public Servants Front of the Democratic Revolutionary Party [PRD] has decided to engage in the spiritual meditation of a rosary for peace and against intervention. This meditation will take place in front of the U.S. Embassy as of today at 1700 and will conclude at 1800 tomorrow, Tuesday. All institutional political committees and patriotic people in general are invited to participate. The following is a text of the communique issued by the public servants:

Public Servants Front

Democratic Revolutionary Party

Communique

The Public Servants Front of the PRD concerned about:

1. The hunger siege looming over our people because of the measures adopted by the warlike government of Mr Ronald Reagan, measures that include the freezing of funds and a commercial embargo.

2. The deliberate psychological preparation of the U.S. people and the international community to promote the acceptance of justifications for an armed invasion of our territory.

3. The provocations by commando-type vehicles, planes flying low over peasant communities, the insulting attitude toward our fellow citizens on the part of some "zonians," and the direct participation of U.S. soldiers in mobilizations of the ill-called "Civic Crusade."

Resolves:

1. To spiritually meditate a rosary for peace and against intervention in front of the U.S. Embassy from 1700 hours on Monday, 28 March, to 1800 hours on Tuesday, 29 March.

2. All institutional political committees and patriotic people in general are invited to participate.

Do not fail to fulfill this historic commitment for peace and against foreign intervention.

Dr Benjamin Colamarco

Secretary General

Columnist on Roles Played by U.S. Officials

PA281548 Panama City LA REPUBLICA in Spanish 27 Mar 88 p 6-A

[From the "In Passing" column by Justo Arroyo: "Ronald Nixon"]

[Text] The U.S. Government, as it confronts a more and more hostile world, needs to find mechanisms to act with impunity while appearing to act legally. This is why there is an entire bureaucratic network, whose ultimate objective it is to cover the figure of the President, who is solely, invisibly, and ultimately responsible for the general confusion [desmadre]. The skein has been formed in such a way that the people constantly blame government officials and institutions that have been appointed and formed to stop all the filth that would otherwise fall on the President's head.

Elliott Abrams is one of those officials. We Panamanians have heaped our mockery on and felt the utmost revulsion for this pathetic figure of the State Department. All too often, we blame him for the Reagan administration's policy toward us. But we should not. Abrams gets paid to

put up with the excrement and the vomit. His duty is to receive them, keep his mouth shut, go home, and change his clothes. Something similar happens to Arthur Davis [U.S. ambassador to Panama] and John Maisto [deputy chief of mission of the U.S. Embassy in Panama].

All of them function like mattresses for Shultz and Reagan. The fact that Abrams, Davis, and Maisto are highly visible makes them tempting targets, and the people fall for this trap. I am sure even the physical appearances of Abrams and Davis were considered before they were appointed. Davis, who looks like a sinister good-soul, and Abrams, who looks like a leech, are the perfect lightning rods for our anger.

All of this, of course, is a trap so that we will continue to lose time, so that we will continue to stage demonstrations or respond to them while their leaders act clandestinely. That is what happened to Terrence Kneebone [public affairs counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Panama]. Why did the Panamanian foreign minister have to respond to that 10th-rate individual? And why expel him? Kneebone, as Davis, Maisto, and Abrams, is only a messenger boy, an errand boy. And if Elliott Abrams is not allowed to enter the Senate for being a liar, why do we have to refer to him? In any event, let us speak to those who give them the lies and ask them to say them.

Despite our size, the respect which we have obliged gringos to observe is born of our unflinching dignity. We have no other arms. And that last response by General Noriega to Reagan's envoy is to make them see, once and for all, that what is at stake here is the exercise and upholding of values without which no man in any country can continue. Hence our will to resist, because if we fall, all the nobleness of so many men and women who preceded us would also crumble.

For the gringos, obliged to keep up 1,000 appearances, dignity and morals are secondary considerations. They only care about the end result, not how they achieve it. That is why they burn the Abramses and the Davises. Then they pass them into retirement with juicy pensions, while they "create" others in their CIA "farms." We must base ourselves on our dignity, which is what consolidates and strengthens us. Meanwhile, the government of Ronald Reagan agonizes in the swamp of immorality of the one whom he resembles more each day: Richard Nixon. And, like Nixon, he will fall under his own lies.

Argentina

'Important Progress' on Falklands Reported

PY281825 Buenos Aires DYN in Spanish 1426 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 28 Mar (DYN)—Marcelo Delpech, Argentine ambassador to the United Nations, today said that Argentine diplomacy has achieved "important progress" on the Malvinas issue.

Delpech stressed the fact that "30 parties from different areas, and all the members of the UN Security Council, have asked for negotiations" between Great Britain and Argentina on the issue of sovereignty of the islands. He said the fact that the issue has passed from the the UN General Assembly to the UN Security Council was "very important."

Delpech said he does not have official information on British Foreign Minister Geoffrey Howe's statements. Howe reportedly said that his country was willing to improve relations with Argentina. This is "quite positive" and linked " to the diplomatic effort by our country in all international forums," Delpech added.

Delpech returned to the country this morning at the head of a delegation of UN ambassadors who were invited to visit Bariloche and Salta.

Mozambique's Chissano Arrives for Visit 29 Mar

PY291428 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 1330 GMT 29 Mar 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 29 Mar (TELAM) —The plane carrying Mozambican President Joaquin Chissano landed at 1030 [1330 GMT] at the Jorge Newbery Metropolitan Airport. Chissano was met at the airport by President Raul Alfonsin, cabinet ministers, and judicial and congressional authorities.

The African chief of state, who will remain in the country unitl 30 March, arrived in the company of his wife and a delegation of his country's officials.

Economy Ministry Confirms IMF Director's Visit

PY290248 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 1919 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 28 Mar (TELAM)—The Economy Ministry today confirmed that IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus has visited Argentina to hold talks with high-ranking government officials.

In a press communique, which did not give the precise date of the visit, the ministry stated that the visitor met with President Raul Alfonsin, Economy Minister Juan Sourrouille, Finance Secretary Mario Brodersohn, and Argentine Central Bank President Jose Luis Machinea at the Olivos presidential residence.

During the meeting they talked about the next IMF meeting and studied possible changes to the IMF policies regarding the foreign debt, the communique stated.

According to Bulletin No 316 from the Economy Ministry, during the talks the Argentine Government noted the need for finding long-term solutions to the foreign-debt problem by promoting greater investment and economic growth in the debtor countries.

At the 11 April meeting of the IMF Interim Committee, the situation of the most-indebted countries will be examined. Sourrouille considers that this meeting will be very important and expressed confidence that it could bring about some change in the IMF policy toward those countries.

During the meeting with Camdessus, the Argentine officials pointed out the serious effect on the country of the drop in prices of export products, and the government's concern about the future evolution of interest rates.

Fire Bombs Hurled in Office Attack

PY281226 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 1108 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 28 Mar (NA)— Police sources have reported that a group of unidentified people have planted fire bombs in the offices of the farming firm "Lanusse Hermanos," located on the 7th floor of a downtown building of this capital.

The criminals entered the building, located on 256 Esmeralda Street, and after overpowering the building's porter, they went to the 7th floor where they hurled Molotov cocktails at the offices of the Lanusse family. A member of this family was kidnapped a few years ago.

The criminals left the building a few minutes after the attack. The 10-storey building is used mainly by commercial firms.

A police patrol, two fire engines, and a mechanical police ladder were used and in 1 hour they managed to put out the fire.

The Third Police Precinct labelled the case as one of "assault, arson, and illegally depriving a citizen of his liberty."

The case will be heard by Judge Jaime Far Suau. The reasons for the attack are not yet known.

Drug Ring With Paraguay Links Dismantled

PY290243 Buenos Aires DYN in Spanish 2336 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 28 Mar (DYN)—Fourteen people have been arrested and 60 kilograms of marijuana seized during police operations in the federal capital, greater

Buenos Aires, and Misiones Province. Thus, a large drug trafficking ring with connections in Paraguay and Brazil was dismantled, reliable police sources revealed today.

This ring of drug traffickers, headed by a powerful Paraguayan family affiliated with the progovernment Colorado Party and an Argentine citizen who resides in Brazil, brought between 250 and 300 kilograms of marijuana into Argentina every month, sources contacted by DYN revealed.

The drug was brought directly from Paraguay, hidden in the engines of seven pick-up trucks owned by one of the drug traffickers, and it was distributed for sale at night entertainment centers in the federal capital and the northern and western zones of Greater Buenos Aires.

The police sources did not reveal the identity of the 14 persons arrested so as not to hinder investigations, which began 4 weeks ago when personnel from the Drug Addiction Directorate of the Buenos Aires Province Police detected what in police jargon is known as "the end of a marijuana pipeline."

It was thus determined that a property located in Martinez, in the northern zone of Greater Buenos Aires, was used to receive and divide up large shipments of marijuana that were brought in directly from the northeastern border of Argentina.

Brazil

Sarney Seeking To Form New Political Party

PY281322 Brasilia Radio Nacional da Amazonia Network in Portuguese 1000 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] President Jose Sarney will resign his titles of PMDB Honorary President and PFL Protector to form a new congressional bloc above party lines, or a new party more aligned with the government.

This announcement was made by Deputy Luiz Eduardo Magalhaes, PFL of Bahia State, who is one of the promoters of the formation of a new party.

Administration Minister Aluizio Alves, meanwhile, prefers the creation of a new congressional bloc because the creation of a new political party could cause regional problems and make a broader base of support in Congress more difficult.

Chief of Civilian Household Ronaldo Costa Couto says that the government decision to seek support from a new congressional bloc does not mean it will separate itself from the PMDB.

[Begin Costa Couto recording] The government does not intend to liberate itself from the PMDB or any other party. We have a lot of respect for the PMDB and its history, but in order to facilitate the implementation of government programs, the government is working objectively, in fact struggling, to obtain a reliable congressional majority. [end recording]

Ronaldo Costa Couto believes that the support of a majority bloc in Congress is essential for the government to implement its programs.

New Progovernment Bloc in Constituent Assembly

PY281317 Brasilia Radio Nacional da Amazonia Network in Portuguese 1000 GMT 25 Mar 88

[Text] A new government support group has been created in the Constituent Assembly: the Democratic Transition Bloc [Bloco da Transicao Democratica]. The creation of the group could prompt a cabinet reform.

Yesterday Deputy Carlos Sant'ana, leader of the government bloc [PFL] in the Chamber of Deputies, announced the creation of the Democratic Transition Bloc, whose objective is to support the presidency at the Constituent Assembly.

[Begin Sant'ana recording] Initially, we want to consolidate the bloc, which was announced for the first time in the last voting session.

The group is a multiparty, majority bloc called the Democratic Transition Bloc. It will initially represent a coalition of several forces, parties, and blocs. Each group or party will maintain its party identity.

I would say that this bloc is expressing itself in the Constituent Assembly. Once the assembly is dissolved, the bloc could be transformed into a new party.

This bloc, which could even grow in the future, is very important for the government because it will constitute its political support base. [end recording]

Deputy Carlos Sant'ana said the creation of this new bloc could even prompt a cabinet reform in order to include members of the bloc in the cabinet. However, he remarked that nothing has been decided yet on this issue.

Chile

Guzman Comments on National Party 'Crisis'

PY281642 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0244 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Santiago, 27 Mar (EFE)—Today attorney Jaime Guzman, vice president of the National Renewal Party (PARENA), which is the base of the Chilean military regime, said that the serious crisis within his party is due to the clash of supporters of two different styles: "those accustomed to wheeling and dealing" [arreglines], and the new generation.

Guzman, who is considered one of the ideologists of the system created by General Pinochet's military regime, caused the crisis within the party 2 weeks ago when he asked Sergio Onofre Jarpa, current president of the party and former interior minister of the military regime, to resign.

Jarpa refused to resign and passed the problem on to the party's tribunal, which decided to discipline one of Guzman supporters.

The PARENA was formed by the coalition of the Independent Democratic Union headed by Guzman, the Labor National Front headed by Jarpa, and the Movement for National Unity headed by Andres Allamand, the other PARENA vice president.

Today, commenting on the causes of the crises, Guzman said it "is due to the clash of two very different styles: the style of those who represent the old and traditional wheeling and dealing and our style, which is represented by the new generation and is oriented to an overall education."

Guzman added that the confrontation "clearly surfaced during the last internal elections, when the traditionalist, currently leading the party, could not guarantee a serious and clear process."

Jarpa followers, on the other hand, have said that Guzman used the influence and the help of the state apparatus and public officials to lean on people in the party.

They also said that Guzman provoked the crisis when he realized that his position could not obtain the majority for the election of the new leadership.

According to statements, Guzman followers are accused of advocating the acceptance, without condition, of Pinochet's candidacy in the plebiscite, while Jarpa followers want to condition their eventual support to the president.

According to the Constitution promulgated by Pinochet in 1981, the Armed Forces will propose a candidate for president for the 1989-97 period and submit their nomination to a plebiscite. Only if a majority of Chileans vote no in the plebiscite will there be direct elections in 1990.

The designation of a candidate for the 1988 plebiscite must be a unanimous decision of the commanders in chief of the Armed Forces (to which Pinochet also belongs) and the director of Carabineros. The decision must be made at the latest 90 days before the end of the present period of government (11 March 1989).

Poll Shows Lead for No Vote in Plebiscite

PY290224 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 2300 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Only 18.8 percent of the electorate would vote yes in the plebiscite if General Augusto Pinochet was the candidate. This was revealed by a random poll conducted by expert sociologists of the Superior Arts and Social Science Institute. Leonardo Yanez, one of the academicians who participated in the evaluation of the survey, said this was the response to the question: What will your position be if the plebiscite is held as established by the Constitution?

[Begin Yanez recording] Only 18.8 percent of the population would vote yes if Pinochet was the candidate. By socio-economic group, this 18.8 percent is mostly made up of the upper-income group—about one-fourth of this group. In smaller proportions come the medium- and low-income groups. Women are more inclined to vote yes than men. So are those who are more than 50 years old. However, 44.4 percent would vote no. This opinion is much more noticeable in the medium-income group, with 48.4 percent. Then comes the low-income group, with 37.7 percent. [end recording]

The sociologist said the poll revealed a surprising response to the question: What would your attitude be if the candidate was someone other than Gen Pinochet? In this case, those voting yes would rise to 23.2 percent, while those voting no would be 55.4 percent.

The poll was conducted on a sample of 532 people, women and men older than 18 in the upper, medium, and lower classes in the area of the greater Santiago, without regard to whether they are employed. The poll was held between 15 and 18 March in the communities of Santiago, San Miguel, La Cisterna, Munoa, Providencia, La Reina, Conchali, Reinta, Quinta Normal, Pudahuel, La Granja, San Bernardo, La Florida, Puente Alto, Maipu, and Quilicura.

Those polled were also asked their opinion on the current economic situation and the consequences of the victory of the yes or the no vote in the plebiscite.

Woman Seriously Injured in Bazooka Attack

PY291223 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0651 GMT 29 Mar 88

[Text] Santiago, 29 Mar (EFE)—According to police sources, a woman was seriously injured last night by a bazooka projectile fired by unknown people on the eastern outskirts of Santiago.

According to the report released by the authorities, the bazooka attack occurred at approximately 2200 (0200 GMT), and it seems it was directed at an electricity installation located in the Penalolen district.

For unknown reasons the projectile went off course and exploded in a neighboring house, which according to the sources was totally destroyed.

Rosa Campos, 28, daughter of the owner of the house, was wounded by the explosion and was taken to a hospital. She is in serious condition.

Police quickly cordoned off the area and began the appropriate investigation in order to find the attackers, who apparently fired from a moving vehicle that quickly left the area.

Buses Set on Fire; 6 FPMR Members Arrested

PY291443 Santiago Domestic Service in Spanish 1030 GMT 29 Mar 88

[Excerpts] The police have reported that two buses were destroyed by fire bombs in attacks at 1200, Santa Cecilia Street, and on the corner of Recoleta Avenue and (Minos Damero) Street in Santiago. No one was reported injured. [passage omitted]

It has also been reported that six Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front [FPMR] terrorists were arrested in Talca. The terrorists, who were placed at the disposal of the military courts, are responsible for several robberies and violent attacks. They have been identified as (Jose Guillermo Sepulveda Henriquez), (Jose Vicente Ramirez Sualto), Juan Enrique Avila Gutierrez, Luis Fernando Sandoval Sandoval, Osvaldo Antonio Moya Gonzalez, and Gladys Cecilia Hormazabal Roca. According to an official report released by the Talca Investigations Police, the detainees were in possession of a large quantity of Marxist literature, ammunition, a pistol, and other subversive materials.

Carabineros Director Leaves for South Africa

PY281827 Santiago Domestic Service in Spanish 1700 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] This morning Carabineros Director General Rodolfo Stange began an official professional visit to South Africa. He is accompanied by General Aflredo Nunez Allende. Stange has been invited by the national South African police. During his absense, he will be replaced by Carabineros Deputy Director General Oscar Torres Rodriguez. Stange is due to return to Chile in the second half of April.

Colombia

Acting Attorney General Submits Resignation

PA281854 Bogota Inravision Television Cadena 1 in Spanish 1735 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Excerpt] It was reported today that acting Attorney General Alfredo Gutierrez Marquez submitted his resignation to President Virgilio Barco Vargas on 2 March [as heard], when, as you recall, the plane which had been stolen from the Bogota military base, here in Catam, landed close to Pablo Escobar's Napoles farm.

The resignation occurs at the same time it has been reported that the land where the aforementioned plane landed belong to Libardo Gutierrez Marquez, brother of the attorney general who resigned. [passsage omitted]

Paraguay

Colombia Grants Political Asylum to Saguier

PY291254 Asuncion EL DIARIO in Spanish 29 Mar 88 p 11

[Excerpt] According to reports from Bogota, the Colombian Government has granted political asylum to Hermes Rafael Saguier. Meanwhile, Saguier remains at Ambassador Vicente Martinez Emiliani's residence in Paraguay along with former officer Napoleon Ortigoza, who also received political asylum in Colombia.

Therefore, Paraguayan authorities will now have to study Saguier's case in addition to Ortigoza's case because it is the prerogative of the national government to grant or refuse safe conduct.

Ortigoza and Saguier took refuge at Ambassador Martinez Emiliani's residence on 23 March and have remained under the protection of the Republic of Colombia since then. [passage omitted]

U.S. Official Trying To 'Destroy' Good Ties

PY281530 Asuncion Domestic Service in Spanish 2330 GMT 26 Mar 88

[Voz del Coloradismo commentary]

[Excerpt] Today an international news agency reported a new attempt to destroy the fraternal and good relations, and the alliance and understanding, between the United States and Paraguay. In fact, the remarks made by a U.S. official, Mr Robert Gelbard, reflect a clear intervention in our domestic affairs and show that despite the complex technological and computerized development achieved by the United States, the information system used by U.S. diplomats continues to be inefficient.

This type of remark, unfortunately, supports a statement by the Guatemalan foreign minister, who said that the United States is an international bully who uses the small Central American countries for his own purposes. We would add that the United States also uses the South American countries.

Mr Gelbard said he was extremely concerned about the situation of democracy in Paraguay, adding that President Stroessner, who is our leader, wants to remain in power for an indefinite period, that he has closed all opposition radios and newspapers, and that he has stepped up repression of the unions. We do not want to

conceal his remarks; on the contrary, we want the people to know them in order to realize how wrong he is. Mr Gelbard added that the prospects for the achievement of full democracy in Paraguay are unfortunately negative. He also referred to the opening of an antidrug agency in Asuncion, criticizing the fact that our government has not cooperated with the antidrug effort.

This is what Mr Gelbard said. Mr Gelbard is probably annoyed at the great affection, the great liking, and the support the Paraguayan people have extended and will continue to extend to the U.S. people, whenever it is necessary. We were, we are, and we will always be friends and allies of the United States, and it will not be a certain Gelbard and a well-known anti-diplomat, who is a specialist in drug addiction or in drug addicts, who will change the course of things. Many of those who have tried to do this, like that little white house, are now peeling bananas in Central America.

We do not condemn Mr Gelbard's intrigue. In the final analysis, he acts, thinks, and makes statements on the basis of the distorted information his anti-diplomatic ambassador to our country sends to him. We are, however, surprised at the fact that the most modern country of the world, whose astronauts have breakfast on the earth, lunch on the moon, and dinner on another planet, to return to the earth on the next day, should continue to have such an inappropriate information system.

The issue is simple, and it can be explained through mathematical reasoning. Paraguay is the United States' main South American ally in the struggle against communism. It is known that there is Marxist infiltration in the U.S. State Department; even a 15-year-old boy not long ago managed to interfere with its computer system. There are pro-communist ambassadors like White and this specialist in drug addicts. Therefore, the order given to these infiltrated communists is to attack the U.S. main anticommunist partner, ally, and friend, the Colorado government of President Stroessner. They want to set one people against the other, but they will fail, because Paraguayans do not fail in their commitments. We have committed ourselves to helping the United States achieve a total victory for democracy, freedom, human rights, and for the common objectives of the anticommunist struggle. We will continue to cooperate with the United States and the U.S. people will continue to cooperate with us, despite these rabid Marxists who have infiltrated the State Department. Despite their provocations, we will not fall into the traps prepared by the Gelbards, the Taylors, the Whites, and others. We will continue with the United States, alongside the United States, helping the United States achieve the final elimination of the international communist threat from our continent and from everywhere in the world. [passage omitted]

Saldivar To Sign Drug Fighting Pact in Brazil

PY291200 Asuncion HOY in Spanish 29 Mar 88 p 11

[Excerpt] Today the foreign ministers of Paraguay and Brazil, Carlos A. Saldivar and Roberto de Abreu Sodre, respectively, will sign a cooperation agreement in Brasilia to fight drug trafficking. This is the first time the two countries have signed an agreement to improve the joint action against this illicit activity.

Yesterday Foreign Minister Saldivar and an entourage of high-ranking officials from his ministry travelled to Brasilia for that purpose. The entourage included Efrain Dario Centurion, international economic affairs under secretary; Antonio Moreno Rufinelli, legal adviser; and Enzo Debernardi, Itaipu Binational Entity Paraguayan director. [passage omitted]

Uruguay

Sanguinetti Praises C. America Cease-Fire

PY282028 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1632 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Montevideo, 28 Mar (EFE)—Uruguayan President Julio Maria Sanguinetti has described as "a victory of faith and a victory for all of Central America" the cease-fire agreement signed between the Nicaraguan Government and the "contras."

In a television interview, the Uruguayan president added that the agreement "represents a victory for Central Americans and for Contadora," a group formed by Colombia, Mexico, Venezuela, and Panama. Panama has now been suspended.

Uruguay, which along with Argentina, Brazil, and Peru form the Contadora Support Group, "has always made a winning bet, a bet based on faith," Sanguinetti said.

The Uruguayan Government has repeatedly said that "only through talks" would an "appropriate and final" solution be found for the Central American conflict.

Referring to the situation in Panama, the Uruguay president said it is part of Panama's "specific issues" with the United States.

The Panamanian situation "is difficult, and we hope it will be resolved soon," Sanguinetti said.

Favors Perestroyka Help

PY281436 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1902 GMT 26 Mar 88

[Text] Montevideo, 26 Mar (EFE)—Uruguayan President Julio Maria Sanguinetti, who yesterday returned to his country after a visit to the Soviet Union, has said "we have to help (Mikhail) Gorbachev with the perestroyka (reform)."

Sanguinetti and his entourage, made up of representatives of all political parties, has just completed the first ever visit of a Uruguayan president to the USSR.

Sanguinetti said his visit to Leningrad and Moscow was "positive" because "the political and commercial purposes of his trip were fulfilled."

Sanguinetti added that the current reorganization process in the Soviet Union "is important for the entire world."

"How could such a change not be positive?" wondered Sanguinetti.

According to the Uruguayan president, people in the USSR "more frequently talk about reform, democracy, participation, and freedom."

New Blanco Party President Seeks Unity

PY281459 Madrid EFE in Spanish 2336 GMT 27 Mar 88

[Excerpt] Montevideo, 27 Mar (EFE)—Today Roberto Rubio, the new president of the National or Blanco Party, said that his party—which is Uruguay's largest opposition party—will have "a single platform" for the general elections of November 1989.

Rubio succeeded historical Blanco leader Wilson Ferreira Aldunate, who died of cancer on 15 March. He has said that his main objective is to achieve "unity within the party."

In a statement published today by the newspaper EL PAIS, Rubio said that "a more important objective, however, is that the party convention to be held in May approve the party platform."

A medical doctor, Rubio, 70, stressed that "there may be some shades of meaning, but the party will adopt a single platform." [passage omitted]

Suriname

Netherlands Minister Visits; Demonstration Held

FL281831 Paramaribo International Service in English 1730 GMT 28 Mar 88

[Text] Dutch Foreign Minister Van den Broek yesterday arrived in Suriname at the head of a delegation. His visit will last for 3 days and is aimed at normalizing relations between Suriname and Holland and to remove the political barriers between the two countries.

On his arrival in the country, the Dutch foreign minister declared that he hopefully looks forward to the talks. We shall try jointly to give content to the restoration of the relations, said Van den Broek. During his stay in Suriname, he will have talks with the government, the National Assembly, and functional groups in the society. After his return to Holland, he will submit a report to the Dutch Government and parliament. Following this, the Dutch minister of development cooperation, Piet Bukman, will visit Suriname.

The government has denied permission to the Committee for the Restoration of Relations with Holland Only After to hold demonstrations to coincide with the visit of the Dutch foreign minister. However, the committee went ahead with the demonstration yesterday at the Hotel Torarica where the Dutch minister is staying and in front of the Dutch Embassy in Paramaribo. The committee is of the opinion that the relations with Holland can be restored only after the terrorist activities in Suriname have been stopped, [words indistinct] agreement of Holland Ronnie Brunswijk has been disarmed, and the weapons which have been brought into the country illegally leave Suriname by the same route in which they were brought in.

Church Body To Mediate Between Warring Parties

PM280915 Rotterdam NRC HANDELSBLAD in Dutch 19 Mar 88 p 1

[Unnamed "own correspondent" dispatch: "Church Committee Mediates in Suriname"]

[Text] Paramaribo, 19 Mar—Suriname's Committee of Christian Churches (CCK) will act as mediator between the government and the Brunswijk group to bring an end to the armed conflict between the two sides. This was stated yesterday by President Shankar during the National Assembly debate on the government declaration. Initially, the Surinamese Army was not in favor of peace talks.

Since the summer of 1986 Brunswijk has been engaged in armed resistance against the Surinamese Government in eastern Suriname. His original aim was to topple the regime of Army leader Desi Bouterse and to clear the way for a democratically governed Suriname. At the end of last year the Bouterse regime made way for an elected government.

"We will do everything to bring back calm and security to the interior as soon as possible," said Shankar, who announced that both sides have accepted the Christian Church as mediator. The last skirmishes between Brunswijk and the Army took place in the fall of 1987.

Yesterday the Committee of Christian Churches made "an urgent appeal to all Surinamese and friends of Suriname to make every effort in word and deed to bring an end to this fratricidal conflict."